Dupl. 841.d.15(1) (3)

CREUSA,

Queen of ATHENS.

A

TRAGEDY.

As it is Acted at the

Theatre Royal in *Drury-lane*

By His MAJESTY's Servants.

WRITTEN BY

Mr. WILLIAM WHITEHEAD.

LONDON:

Printed for R. and J. DODSLEY in *Pall-mall*;
and Sold by M. COOPER in *Pater-noſter-Row*. 1754.

PROLOGUE.

Spoken by Mr. Ross.

PROLOGUES of old, the Learn'd in Language say,
Were merely Introductions to the Play,
Spoken by Gods, or Ghosts, or Men who knew
Whate'er was previous to the Scenes in view;
And complaisantly came to lay before ye
The several Heads, and Windings of the Story.

But modern Times and British *Rules are such,*
Our Bards beforehand must not tell too much;
Nor dare we, like the neighb'ring French, *admit*
Ev'n Confidantes, who might instruct the Pit,
By asking Questions of the leading Few,
And hearing Secrets, which before they knew.

Yet what we can to help this antique Piece
We will attempt.—Our Scene to-night is Greece.
And, by the Magic of the Poet's Rod,
This Stage the Temple of the Delphic *God!*
Where Kings, and Chiefs, and Sages came of old,
Like modern Fools, to have their Fortunes told;
And Monarchs were enthron'd, or Nations freed,
As an old Priest, or wither'd Maid decreed.
Yet think not all were equally deceiv'd,
Some knew, more doubted, many more believ'd.
In short, these Oracles, and witching Rhimes
Were but the pious Frauds of ancient Times;
Wisely contriv'd to keep Mankind in awe,
When Faith was Wonder, and Religion Law!

Thus much premis'd, to every feeling Breast
We leave the Scenes themselves to tell the rest.

—Yet something sure was to the Critics said,
Which I forget,—some Invocation made!

Ye Critic Bands, like jealous Guardians, plac'd
To watch th' Encroachments on the Realms of Taste,
From you our Author would two Boons obtain,
Not wholly diffident, nor wholly vain:
Two things he asks; 'tis modest sure, from you
Who can do all things, to request but two:
First to his Scenes a kind Attention pay,
Then judge!—with Candor judge—and we obey.

Persons Represented.

XUTHUS, King of *Athens*, — Mr. BERRY.

ILYSSUS, an unknown Youth, Attendant on the Temple at *Delphi*, — Miss MACKLIN.

ALETES, a *Grecian* Sage, — Mr. GARRICK.

PHORBAS, an old *Athenian*, — Mr. MOSSOP.

Priests of *Apollo*.

Citizens of *Athens*.

CREÜSA, Queen of *Athens*, — Mrs. PRITCHARD.

PYTHIA, Priestess of *Apollo*, — Miss HAUGHTON.

LYCEA, and other Women attending on the Queen, — Mrs. COWPER, &c.

Virgins belonging to the Temple.

Guards, &c.

Scene, the Vestibule of the Temple of *Apollo* at *Delphi*, and the Laurel Grove adjoining.

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

GEORGE BUSSY,

Lord Viſc. VILLIERS,

The following TRAGEDY is
inſcribed by

His Lordſhip's

Moſt obliged

and moſt affectionate

humble Servant,

W. WHITEHEAD.

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

GEORGE BRISTOW,

Lord Vic. VILLIERS,

The following TRAGEDY is
inscribed by

His Lordship's

Most obliged

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humble Servant,

W. WHITEHEAD.

Advertiſement.

THE Subject of the following Scenes is ſo ancient, ſo ſlightly mentioned by Hiſtorians, and ſo fabulouſly treated by *Euripides* in his Tragedy of *Ion*, that the Author thought himſelf at liberty to make the Story his own. Some glaring Circumſtances he was obliged to adhere to, which he has endeavoured to render probable.

CREÜSA,
Queen of ATHENS.
A
TRAGEDY.

ACT I.

The Veſtibule of the Temple.

ILYSSUS *and Virgins.*

ILYSSUS.

HASTE, haſte, ye Virgins; round the Columns twine
Your flowery Chaplets; and with Streams freſh-drawn
Of *Caſtaly*, bedew the ſacred Porch
Of the great God of Day. Already ſee
His orient Beam has reach'd the double Top
Of high *Parnaſſus*, and begins to ſhed
A gleamy Luſtre o'er the Laurel Grove!
Haſte, haſte, ye Virgins. From the Vale beneath
I hear the Noiſe of Chariots, and of Steeds
Which hither bend their Courſe, for every Sound
Seems nearer than the former.—And behold

A reverend Stranger, who perhaps proclaims
Th' Approach of ſome great Monarch, to conſult
All-ſeeing *Phœbus*, or implore his Aid.
Haſte, haſte, ye Virgins!

Enter PHORBAS.

PHORBAS.

Tell me, gentle Maids,
And thou, fair Youth, who ſeem'ſt to lead the Train,
Is this the Temple of the *Delphic* God?

ILYSSUS.

It is; and on the middle Point of Earth
Its firm Foundations by immortal Hands
Stand fix'd: —— but break we off; the folded Gates
Unbar, and lo! the Prieſteſs' ſelf appears!

[*The* Pythia *ſpeaks as ſhe deſcends from the Temple*

PYTHIA.

Hence, ye profane! nor with unhallow'd Step
Pollute the Threſhold of the *Delian* King
Who ſlew the *Python!* — Say, from whence thou art,
And what thy Buſineſs, Stranger.

PHORBAS.

Sacred Maid!
From *Athens* am I come, the Harbinger
Of great *Creuſa*, mine and *Athens'* Queen

PYTHIA.

Comes ſhe on pious Purpoſe, to adore
The myſtic Shrine oracular?

PHORBAS.

She does;
And with her comes the Partner of her Bed,
Æolian Xuthus: he whoſe powerful Arm
Sav'd *Athens* from her Fate, and in return
From good *Ereſtheus'* bounteous Hand receiv'd

His

His Daughter and his Crown.——† Would he had found
Some other Recompence! [† *Half aside.*

PYTHIA. [*Overhearing him.*

Would he had found?
Old Age is talkative, and I may learn
Somewhat of moment from him.—Wherefore come they?
Does Famine threaten, or wide-wasting Plague
Infest the Land?

PHORBAS.

Thank Heaven, our crouded Streets
Have felt no dire Disease; and Plenty still
Laughs in our blooming Fields. Alas! I fear
The childless Goddess who presides o'er *Athens*
Has found a surer Method to declare
How ill she brooks that any Stranger Hand
Should wield th' *Athenian* Scepter.

PYTHIA.

Does from her
The Vengeance come?

PHORBAS

I know not whence it comes,
But this I know, full fifteen Years have roll'd
Since first their Hands were join'd, and roll'd in vain;
For still the Royal Pair in Silence mourn,
Curs'd with a barren Bed. For this they come,
T' explore the latent Cause, and beg of Heav'n
To grant an Heir, or teach them where to fix,
On what selected Head, th' *Athenian* Crown.

PYTHIA.

And Heaven, no doubt, will hear and grant their Prayer.
Hyssus, haste, and bid the Priests prepare
For Sacrifice. You, *Nysa*, and your Sisters,
Amid the Laurel Grove with Speed perform

23 July 1856 C.A.

The Morning's due Luſtration.
Then hither all return.—Myſelf mean while
Will tempt the Vice of Age, and try to draw } *Aſide.*
Some uſeful Secrets from him.

The good King
Of whom you ſpake, *Erectheus*, did his People
Eſteem and love him as they ought? for Fame
Talk'd largely of his Worth. He was a King——

PHORBAS.

He was my good old Maſter, ſuch a King
As Heaven but rarely ſends. Did we eſteem
And love him, doſt thou aſk? O, we ador'd him,
He was our Father, not our King.—Theſe Tears
At leaſt may ſpeak *my* Heart.—We muſt not hope
In theſe degenerate Times to ſee him equall'd.
He never did an unkind Act, but once,
And then he thought the public Good requir'd it;
Tho' much I fear the Evils we lament
From thence derive their Origin.

PYTHIA.

What Act?
What unkind Act?

PHORBAS.

O Maid, 'twere long to tell
The whole unhappy Story, yet in part
Hear what to me appears too cloſely join'd
With theſe our preſent Ills. There was a Youth
Athenian born, but not of Royal Blood,
His Name *Nicander*; him unlucky Fate
Had made the Lover of our preſent Queen
While yet a Maid. What will not Love attempt
In young ambitious Minds? he told his Pain,
And won the Fair in ſecret to admit,

And to return his Paſſion. The good King
Was for a Time deceiv'd, but found at laſt
Th' audacious Fraud, and drove the guilty Youth
To Baniſhment perpetual. Some ſay
'Twas by his Means he fell, tho' that my Heart
Conſents not to believe. Thus much is ſure,
Nicander wander'd forth a wretched Exile,
And ere few Days had paſt, upon the Road
Were found his well-known Garments ſtain'd with Blood.
Sure Sign of Murder, and as ſure a Sign
No needy Robber was the Inſtrument.

PYTHIA.

How bore *Creuſa* this?

PHORBAS.

At firſt her Sorrows
Were loud and frantic. Time at length ſubdued
Her Rage to ſilent Grief. The good old King,
To ſooth her Woes, conſented ſhe ſhould raiſe
A Tomb to her *Nicander*; and perform
A Kind of annual Rites to parted Love.

PYTHIA.

But that not long continued, for we find
She married *Xuthus*.

PHORBAS.

'Twas a Match of State,
He ſav'd her Country, and ſhe gave her Hand
Becauſe that Country aſk'd it. But her Heart
Is buried with *Nicander*. Still to him,
And *Xuthus'* ſelf permits it, ſhe performs
Her yearly Off'rings, and adorns with Flowers
An empty Tomb.—Would he had liv'd, and reign'd
Her wedded Lord! we had not wanted then
Th' Aſſiſtance of a Stranger Arm to guard

Th'

Th' *Athenian* State, nor had we then been driven
To ſearch for Heirs at *Delphi*.

PYTHIA.

Stop thy Tongue,
Or ſpeak with Rev'rence of the ſacred Shrine.
—Thy Words were haſty, but thy Silence now
Makes juſt Atonement for them.——Then perhaps
Thou think'ſt this want of Heirs a Curſe entail'd
By Heaven on *Athens* for *Nicander*'s Death
And *Xuthus*' Reign?

PHORBAS.

I am *Athenian* born,
Nor love *Æolian* Kings, however great
And good they may be.

PYTHIA.

The Imperial *Xuthus*
Is much renown'd.

PHORBAS.

Is virtuous, brave, and pious;
Perhaps too pious.

PYTHIA.

How!

PHORBAS.

Forgive me, Maid,
I ſpeak my Thoughts with Freedom.

PYTHIA.

What thou ſpeak'ſt
To me, is ſacred. Then perchance thou rank'ſt
His Journey hither to addreſs the God
Among thoſe Acts which thou would'ſt call too pious?

PHORBAS.

For me the Gods of *Athens* would ſuffice.—

Yet do I pay juſt Rev'rence, holy Maid,
To thee, and to thy Shrine.

PYTHIA.

Thy Zeal for *Athens*
Is too intemperate.—But the Train returns
And interrupts our Converſe. Say, *Ilyſſus*,
Are they prepar'd?

Enter ILYSSUS *and Virgins.*

ILYSSUS.

They are, and only wait
Th' approaching Victims.

PYTHIA.

By yon Train, the Queen
Is now on her Arrival. Thou, *Ilyſſus*,
Receive her here; while I, as Cuſtom wills,
Deep in the Temple's inmoſt Gloom retire
And wait th' inſpiring God.—*Ilyſſus*, hear;
When thou haſt paid due Honours to the Queen,
Haſte to *Aletes*, in the Laurel Grove
Impatient I expect him; tell him, Youth,
Things of uncommon Import do demand
His inſtant Preſence.—But the Croud approaches.
Stranger, farewel.—I feel, I feel within
An Heav'n-born Impulſe, and the Seeds of Truth
Are lab'ring in my Breaſt.—Stranger, farewel.

[*The* Pythia *returns to the Temple, and the Gates ſhut.*

Enter CREUSA *and Attendants.*

CREUSA.

No farther need we Conduct. Bid the Guards
Return, and wait the King.

PHORBAS.

Does ought of Moment
Detain him on the Road?

CREUSA.

CREUSA.

He ſtops a while
great *Trophonius'* Cave, that he may leave
Duty unperform'd. Heaven grant his Zeal
May meet with juſt Succeſs!

ILYSSUS.

Pleaſe you, great Queen,
In yon Pavilion to repoſe, and taſte
Some light Refection.

CREUSA.

Ha!—*Lycea*,—*Phorbas*,
What Youth is this? There's ſomething in his Eyes,
His Shape, his Voice.—What may we call thee, Youth?

ILYSSUS.

The Servant of the God, who guards this Fane.

CREUSA.

Bear'ſt thou no Name?

ILYSSUS.

Ilyſſus, gracious Queen,
The Prieſts and Virgins call me.

CREUSA.

Ha! *Ilyſſus!*
That Name's *Athenian*. Tell me, gentle Youth,
Art thou of *Athens* then?

ILYSSUS.

I have no Country,
Nor know I whence I am.

CREUSA.

Who where thy Parents?
Thy Father, Mother?

ILYSSUS.

Ever honor'd Queen,
I never knew a Mother's tender Cares,

Nor

Nor heard th' Inſtructions of a Father's Tongue.

CREUSA.

How cam'ſt thou hither?

ILYSSUS.

Eighteen Years are paſt
Since in the Temple's Portal I was found
A ſleeping Infant.

CREUSA.

Eighteen Years! good Heaven!
That fatal Time recalls a Scene of Woe—
Let me not think.—Were there no Marks to ſhew
From whom or whence thou wert?

ILYSSUS.

I have been told
An Oſier Baſket ſuch as Shepherds weave,
And a few ſcatter'd Leaves were all the Bed
And Cradle I could boaſt.

CREUSA.

Unhappy Child!
But more, O ten times more unhappy they
Who loſt perhaps in thee their only Offspring!
What Pangs, what Anguiſh muſt the Mother feel,
Compell'd, no doubt, by ſome diſaſtrous Fate—
—But this is all Conjecture.—

ILYSSUS.

O great Queen,
Had thoſe from whom I ſprung been form'd like thee;
Had they e'er felt the ſecret Pangs of Nature,
They had not left me to the deſart World
So totally expos'd. I rather fear
I am the Child of Lowlineſs and Vice,
And happy only in my Ignorance.

—Why ſhould ſhe weep? O if her Tears can fall
For even a Stranger's but ſuſpected Woes,
How is that People bleſt where ſhe preſides
As Mother, and as Queen!—Pleaſe you, retire?

CREUSA.

No, ſtay. Thy Sentiments at leaſt beſpeak
A gen'rous Education. Tell me, Youth,
How has thy Mind been form'd?

ILYSSUS.

In that, great Queen,
I never wanted Parents. The good Prieſts
And pious Prieſteſs, who with Care ſuſtain'd
My helpleſs Infancy, left not my Youth
Without Inſtruction. But O, more than all,
The kindeſt, beſt good Man, a neighb'ring Sage
Who has known better Days, tho' now retir'd
To a ſmall Cottage on the Mountain's Brow,
He deals his Bleſſings to the ſimple Swains
In Balms and powerful Herbs. He taught me Things
Which my Soul treaſures as its deareſt Wealth,
And will remember ever. The good Prieſts,
'Tis true, had taught the ſame, but not with half
That Force and Energy; Conviction's ſelf
Dwelt on *Aletes'* Tongue.

CREUSA.

Aletes, ſaid'ſt thou?
Was that the good Man's Name?

ILYSSUS.

It is, great Queen,
For yet he lives, and guides me by his Counſels.

CREUSA.

What did he teach thee?

ILYSSUS.

ILYSSUS.

To adore high Heaven,
And venerate on Earth Heaven's Image, Truth!
To feel for others Woes, and bear my own
With manly Reſignation. —— Yet I own
Some things he taught me which but ill agree
With my Condition here.

CREUSA,

What things were thoſe?

ILYSSUS.

They were for Exerciſe, and to confirm
My growing Strength. And yet I often told him
The Exerciſe he taught reſembled much
What I had heard of War. He was himſelf
A Warrior once.

CREUSA,

And did thoſe Sports delight thee!

ILYSSUS.

Great Queen, I do confeſs my Soul mix'd with them,
Whene'er I graſp'd the Oſier-platted Shield,
Or ſent the mimic Javelin to its Mark,
I felt I know not what of Manhood in me,
But then I knew my Duty, and repreſs'd
The ſwelling Ardor. 'Tis to Shades, I cried,
The Servant of the Temple muſt confine
His leſs-ambitious, not leſs virtuous Cares.

CREUSA,

Did the good Man obſerve, and blame thy Ardor?

ILYSSUS,

He only ſmil'd at my too forward Zeal;
Nay ſeem'd to think ſuch Sports were neceſſary
To ſoften what he call'd more rig'rous Studies.

—Why ſhould ſhe weep? O if her Tears can fall
For even a Stranger's but ſuſpected Woes,
How is that People bleſt where ſhe preſides
As Mother, and as Queen!—Pleaſe you, retire?

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How has thy Mind been form'd?

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And pious Prieſteſs, who with Care ſuſtain'd
My helpleſs Infancy, left not my Youth
Without Inſtruction. But O, more than all,
The kindeſt, beſt good Man, a neighb'ring Sage
Who has known better Days, tho' now retir'd
To a ſmall Cottage on the Mountain's Brow,
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In Balms and powerful Herbs. He taught me Things
Which my Soul treaſures as its deareſt Wealth,
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The Servant of the Temple muſt confine
His leſs ambitious, not leſs virtuous Cares.

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Did the good Man obſerve, and blame thy Ardor?

ILYSSUS,

He only ſmil'd at my too forward Zeal;
Nay ſeem'd to think ſuch Sports were neceſſary
To ſoften what he call'd more rig'rous Studies.

CREUSA.

——Suppoſe when I return to *Athens*, Youth,
Thou ſhould'ſt attend me thither! would'ſt thou truſt
To me thy future Fortunes?

ILYSSUS.

O moſt gladly!
—But then to leave theſe Shades where I was nurs'd
The Servant of the God, how might that ſeem?
And good *Aletes* too, the kind old Man
Of whom I ſpake? — But wherefore talk I thus,
You only throw theſe tempting Lures to try
Th' Ambition of my Youth. —— Pleaſe you, retire.

CREUSA.

Ilyſſus, we will find a time to ſpeak
More largely on this Subject, for the preſent
Let all withdraw and leave us. Youth, farewel,
I ſee the Place, and will retire at leiſure.
Lycea, *Phorbas*, ſtay.

ILYSSUS. [*Aſide.*

How my Heart beats!
She muſt mean ſomething ſure. Tho' good *Aletes*
Has told me poliſhed Courts abound in Falſhood.
But I will bear the Prieſteſs' Meſſage to him,
And open all my Doubts. [*Exit.*

PHORBAS.

Great Queen, why ſtand'ſt thou ſilent? ſomething ſeems
To labour in thy Breaſt.

CREUSA.

Alas! good *Phorbas*,
Didſt thou obſerve that Youth? When firſt my Eye
Glanc'd on his beauteous Form, methought I ſaw
The Perſon of *Nicander*.

PHORBAS.

PHORBAS.

Gracious Queen,
Your Heart misleads your Eyes. The Image there
Too deeply fix'd makes every pleasing Object
Bear some Resemblance to itself.

CREUSA.

Lycea,
And yet, tho' thou wast there I well believe
Thy Youth can scarce remember how he look'd,
When from the Fight triumphant he return'd
Grac'd with the victor Laurel; such a Wreath
As now *Ilyssus* wears. Indeed, *Lycea*,
Thy Mother, had she liv'd, had thought as I do.
Nay when he spake the Voice too was *Nicander's*.
I know not what to think, perhaps 'twas Fancy,
Perhaps 'twas something more.

PHORBAS.

Illustrious Queen,
You do abuse your noble Mind, and lend
To mere illusions of the Brain, the Force
And Power to make you wretched. Grant there were
Some slight Resemblance of *Nicander*'s Form
In young *Ilyssus*, tho' my Eyes perceive not
Even the most distant Likeness, grant there were,
Yet wherefore should the Sight so nearly touch thee,
Casual Similitude, we know too well
Nicander left no Heir. [*She seems disturbed.*
I say not this,
Great Queen, to heighten but relieve your Sorrows,
And banish from your Breast each vain Surmise
Which Fancy might suggest.

CREUSA.

CREUSA.

Too well indeed,
O *Phorbas*, much too well indeed we know
Nicander left no Heir to his Perfections,
No Image of himself.—And yet, good *Phorbas*,
Blame not my Folly, nor demand a Reason
If I intreat thee to examine strictly
The Fortunes of this young Unknown. The Priests
Or Priestess may know more than they entrust
To his unwary Youth. The Sage he spake of,
Could'st thou not search him out; 'tis somewhere near
He dwells, I think, upon the Mountain's Brow.
Thou wonder'st at me, call it if thou please
A Woman's Weakness; but obey me, *Phorbas*.

PHORBAS.

You say I wonder, 'tis indeed to see
My honor'd Queen employ her Thoughts thus idly
On Griefs long past; when things of dear Concern
To her and *Athens* should alarm her nearly.

CREUSA.

What things of near Concern?

PHORBAS.

See'st thou not, Queen,
Thy Crown, *Erectheus'* Crown, the Crown of *Athens*,
Wav'ring in Fortune's Power?

CREUSA.

The Gods will fix it.

PHORBAS.

The Gods? Ah, great *Creusa*, may my Fears
Be vain and groundless; but I fear the Gods
Have left us to ourselves. When we resign'd
Th' *Athenian* Scepter to a Stranger Hand
We did reject their Guidance. Wherefore come we

To *Delphi* now, but that th' offended Gods
Have turn'd too long an inattentive Ear
To our ill-judg'd Petitions.

CREUSA.

Why ill-judg'd?
We aſk'd for Heirs.

PHORBAS.

We did; for *Xuthus'* Heirs,
The Race of *Æolus*.—I know, great Queen,
They were to ſpring from thee; but Heaven permits not
The native Pureneſs of th' *Athenian* Soil
Should mix with foreign Clay. I wiſh we find not
More alien Kings at *Delphi*.

CREUSA.

Think'ſt thou *Xuthus*
Deceives us then? His Worth, his Piety,
Forbid the Thought. Beſides, the ſacred Place
Admits not of Deceit.

PHORBAS.

Credulity
Is not the Vice of Age. Forgive me, Queen,
If I ſuſpect that Piety which brings us
To ſearch for Kings at *Delphi*. Might not *Athens*
Have choſen her own Monarch? Her brave Youth,
Her bearded Sages, are they not the Flower
And Pride of *Greece*? Nay, might'ſt not thou, *Creuſa*,
With liberal Hand beſtow th' Imperial Wreath?
And who has better Right?

CREUSA.

The Gods, who gave it
To me, and my great Anceſtors.

PHORBAS.

PHORBAS.

Whate'er
The Gods beſtow can never be reſum'd
Tho' we repent. The pious Populace
Will rev'rence Kings from Heaven.

CREUSA.

And wherefore not?

PHORBAS.

O Queen, perhaps my Fears are too officious,
But let thy Servant beg——

CREUSA.

I know thy Zeal
For me, and for thy Country. Reſt aſſur'd,
Creuſa never will conſent to ought
Which can endanger *Athens*.

PHORBAS.

My Heart thanks thee!

CREUSA.

Mean while the Youth *Ilyſſus*——

PHORBAS.

Should the King
Confirm'd by Oracles preſume to fix
A Stranger on the Throne.—

CREUSA.

He will not do it.

PHORBAS.

I hope he will not, yet——

CREUSA.

The Youth I ſpake of,
Wilt thou enquire?——

PHORBAS.

PHORBAS.

Should *Xuthus* lay aſide
His uſual Mildneſs, and aſſume at once
The Monarch and the Huſband, could'ſt thou then ——

CREUSA.

In *Athens'* Cauſe I could reſiſt them all.
But ceaſe theſe vain Suſpicions. A few Hours
Will prove thy Fears were groundleſs. Meanwhile, *Phorbas*
Thou wilt find Methods to inform thyſelf
Touching this unknown Youth.

PHORBAS.

By yonder Guards
The King ſhould be at hand.

CREUSA.

I will retire
To the Pavilion, and expect him there.
Yet hear me, *Phorbas*; let not *Xuthus* know
Why thou enquir'ſt.

PHORBAS.

Xuthus has other Cares.

CREUSA.

The Prieſteſs too, I would confer with her.
Tho' that *Lycea* may perform. Farewel,
And proſper in thy Taſk. —— Alas, *Lycea*, [*Exit* Phorbas.
There is a Secret labours in my Breaſt,
But Fate forbids that I ſhould give it Utterance.
This boding Heart was early taught to feel
Too ſenſibly; each diſtant Doubt alarms it;
It ſtarts at Shadows.——But retire we, Maid,
Grief is th' unhappy Charter of our Sex;
The Gods who gave us readier Tears to ſhed
Gave us more Cauſe to ſhed them. [*Exeunt.*

The End of the Firſt ACT.

ACT II.

The Laurel Grove.

ALETES *and* ILYSSUS.

ALETES.

SEEM'D she disturb'd when she beheld thee?

ILYSSUS.

Much;
And when I gave her the slight Hints I knew
Relating to my Fortunes, she dissolv'd
In silent Tears; such soft Humanity
Sure never dwelt in any Breast but hers.
Nor did I think till now that I had Cause
Of Discontent; but since she wept my Fate,
I seem to find a Reason in her Grief,
And feel myself unhappy.

ALETES.

Why unhappy?

ILYSSUS.

I know not why; and yet to be confin'd
Thus to a single Spot; to draw in Air,
To take in Nourishment, to live, to die,
For this was Man design'd? Ah, good *Aletes*,
Sure thou hast taught me, Godlike Man was made
For nobler Purposes of general Good;

For

For Action, not for Reſt.—The Queen propos'd
I ſhould attend her to th' *Athenian* State;
Would'ſt thou adviſe it? Do'ſt thou think, *Aletes*,
She meant I ſhould attend her?

ALETES.

Doubtleſs, Youth,
If ſhe propos'd, ſhe meant it.

ILYSSUS.

And would'ſt thou
Adviſe I ſhould attend her?

ALETES.

Wherefore not?

ILYSSUS.

May I deſert theſe Shades? or can I leave
Thee, thee, my good *Aletes?*

ALETES.

O *Ilyſſus*,
Strive not to hide thy Heart; from me thou can'ſt not;
I form'd it, and I know it. *Delphi*'s Shades
Have now no Peace for thee, thy Boſom feels
Ambition's active, unrelenting Fires.
Thou wiſheſt, and thou hop'ſt, thou know'ſt not what.
'Tis Glory thou would'ſt have: Go then, brave Youth,
Where Virtue calls thee: be the Means but noble
Thou can'ſt not ſoar too high.

ILYSSUS.

My more than Father!
Thy Words inſpire me, and I feel a Warmth
Unknown before.———But then, my Birth—

ALETES.

Thy Birth?
Did I not early teach thee to deſpiſe
A caſual Good? Thou art thyſelf, *Ilyſſus*.
Inform me, Youth, would'ſt thou be what thou art,

Thus fair, thus brave, thus ſenſibly alive
To Glory's fineſt Feel; or give up all,
To be deſcended from a Line of Kings,
The tenth perhaps from *Jove?*—I ſee thy Cheek
Glows a repentant Bluſh.—Our greateſt Heroes,
Thoſe Gods on Earth, thoſe Friends of Human kind,
Whoſe great Examples I would ſet before thee,
Were once unknown like thee. And yet, if Birth
Concern thee, know, prophetic is my Speech,
Thy Fate is now at work, and a few Hours
May ſhow thee what thou art.—My Words alarm thee.

ILYSSUS.

They do indeed. O tell me——

ALETES.

'Tis in vain
Thou would'ſt enquire from me, what Heaven conceals
Till its fit Time. Didſt thou not ſay, *Ilyſſus*,
The *Pythia* would be here?

ILYSSUS.

She comes.

ALETES.

Retire
And leave us to ourſelves.

ILYSSUS.

I will.—And yet
Might I not know—

ALETES.

From me thou can'ſt know nothing.

ILYSSUS.

A few Hours, ſaid you?

ALETES.

Hence, and beg of Heaven
To proſper the Event. Retire and leave us. [*Exit* Ilyſſus.

Enter

Enter PYTHIA.

PYTHIA.

Now good *Aletes*, if thy pregnant Mind,
Deep judging of Events, has ever fram'd
Such artful Truths as won believing Man
To think them born of Heaven, and made my Name
Renown'd in *Greece*, O now exert thy Power.
No common Cauſe demands it. Kings and States
Are our Solicitors, and *Athens'* Fate
Hangs on my Lips.

ALETES.

I know it well. And now
If, as thou ſay'ſt, my ſecret kind Advice,
And worn Experience in the Ways of Men,
Have gain'd thy Altars Credit, and with Gifts
Loaded thy Shrines, now, by one grateful Act
Thou may'ſt repay me all.

PYTHIA.

What Act? O ſpeak,
And gladly I obey.

ALETES.

An Act, my PYTHIA,
Which tho' at firſt it may ſeem bold and dangerous,
Shall in the End add Luſtre to thy Shades,
And make ev'n Kings Protectors of thy Fane.
—O *Pythia*, 'twas the Hand of Heaven itſelf
Which brought theſe Royal Suppliants to thy Shrine.
I could unfold a Tale.—But let it reſt.
Thou ſhalt ere Night know all, and bleſs with me
Th' indulgent Powers above. Only in this
Obey me blindly, *Pythia*.

PYTHIA.

Say in what.

ALETES.

ALETES.

Declare *Ilyſſus* Heir to *Athens'* Crown.

PYTHIA.

Ilyſſus Heir? what mean'ſt thou? 'tis a Fraud
Too palpable.

ALETES.

I knew 'twould ſtartle thee.
But 'tis becauſe thou know'ſt the Fraud, my *Pythia*,
That it alarms thee. Didſt thou really think
This Youth were Heir to the *Athenian* Crown,
Would'ſt thou not ſeize the happy Gift of Chance
And to the World proclaim it?

PYTHIA.

True, I ſhould;
And bleſs my Fate that in theſe ſacred Shades
I had nurs'd up unknowingly a King
For my Protector. But what then might ſeem
The Conſequence, now ſeems the Cauſe, *Aletes*;
Will they not ſay I made the King, to gain
The kind Protector?

ALETES.

So to thee it ſeems;
But who will ſay it? the believing many
Will bow with Rev'rence and implicit Faith
To what thy Shrine ordains; and for the few
Who may ſuſpect the Cheat, true Policy
Will keep them ſilent: ſhould they dare detect
A Fraud like this, and ſpurn at Right divine,
Where were their Power? The many-headed Beaſt
Would feel the ſlacken'd Rein, and from his Back
Shake off the lordly Rider. Nay ſhould *Athens*
Be blind to her own Good, the States of *Greece*,
Thou know'ſt it well, would arm in thy Defence,

And force her to receive the King thou gav'ſt her.
His Form, his unknown Birth, his winning Softneſs,
His Education here in Heaven's own Eye,
All plead in his behalf. And, as he tells me,
The Queen already with unuſual Marks
Of Favour has beheld him. For the King,
A pious Awe and Rev'rence for the Gods
Is his diſtinguiſh'd Attribute. Thou ſeem'ſt
To weigh my Words. To clear thy Doubts at once,
Know many Days have paſt ſince firſt I knew
Of their Approach. Thou think'ſt I ſhould have told thee,
It needed not. I have myſelf prepar'd
Each previous Circumſtance, and found due means
To forward the Event. Thy Part is eaſy;
Behold the Oracle.

PYTHIA *reads.*

"A baniſh'd Youth is *Athens'* Cauſe of Woe."
How know'ſt thou that? [*Looking earneſtly at him.*

ALETES.

Demand not, but read on.

PYTHIA *reads.*

"For that Youth baniſh'd, *Athens* muſt receive
"Another Youth; and on the young Unknown
"Who 'tends my Shrine, and whom I call my Son,
"Beſtow th' Imperial Wreath." The God declares
"No more."

ALETES.

Thou ſeem'ſt amaz'd.

PYTHIA.

I am indeed,
To find thee thus inſtructed on a Theme
I came prepar'd to mention. The Queen's Paſſion,
Her Lover baniſh'd ———

ALETES.

ALETES.

What thou ſeeſt I know
May tell thee I know more. But ſay, from whence
Thou gained'ſt thy Intelligence?

PYTHIA.

From one
Whoſe Zeal may thwart thy Schemes: a warm old Man,
And firm in *Athens'* Cauſe, who came to-day
Before the reſt, and led by my Enquiries
Gave me thoſe Hints on which I thought to build
Prophetic, doubtful Anſwers. But I find
My beſt Inſtructor here.

ALETES.

Perhaps thou do'ſt.
Of this reſt well aſſur'd, I ne'er had aſk'd
Of *Pythia* ought but what I knew with Safety
She might comply with.

PYTHIA.

Tell me what thou know'ſt.

ALETES.

Not yet; 'tis better thou remain in Ignorance
Till all be finiſh'd. But pronounce the Oracle,
And leave the reſt to me. Do'ſt thou diſtruſt me?

PYTHIA.

I do not.—— Yet if on ſlight Hints alone
Thou form'ſt this weighty Fraud, conſider well
What may or may not follow.—By thy Looks
There ſhould be ſomething hid.—Thy coming hither
Was much upon the Time we found this Child.
And ſince, with what almoſt paternal Care
Thou haſt inſtructed him. Tho' that indeed
Might ſpring from thy Benevolence of Heart,

Which

Which I have known is boundleſs. Say, *Aletes*,
What ſhould I think? Thou ſmil'ſt.

ALETES.

Wilt thou obey me?

PYTHIA.

I muſt; and yet if 'tis a Fraud, *Aletes*,
The warm old Man of whom I ſpake deteſts
A Stranger King. Ev'n *Xuthus'* ſelf, whoſe Worth
He doth acknowledge great, he views with Pain
Upon th' *Athenian* Throne.

ALETES.

I know him well;
'Tis *Phorbas*. Do not wonder at my Words,
But find a Means that I may ſee the Queen
In ſecret, unobſerv'd by prying Eyes,
And all that old Man's Fears, and Rage ſhall vaniſh.
He ſhall with Joy receive a Stranger King.
Wilt thou deviſe the Means?

PYTHIA.

I now begin
To hope indeed. There is ſome Secret hid
Of moſt important Weight. But does the Queen—

ALETES.

I will not anſwer thee; my Time's too precious.
Only deviſe ſome Means that I may ſee her
Quite unobſerv'd by all.

PYTHIA.

You cannot ſee her
Till all be paſt. Will that ſuffice?

ALETES.

It will.

PYTHIA.

Here in the Laurel Grove.

ALETES.

No Place more fit.
But O be careful, *Pythia*, that the King
Obſerve us not; for 'tis of mighty Moment
He ſhould believe this ſubſtituted Youth
Of Race *Æolian*. To which End, my *Pythia*,
I have among the Prieſts theſe few Days paſt,
When they ſuſpected not th' Approach of *Xuthus*,
Dropp'd doubtful Hints as if I had diſcover'd
Some antique Marks amid the Oſier Twigs
Which form'd *Ilyſſus'* Cradle, that denote
He ſprang from *Æolus*: And at the Cave
Of great *Trophonius* have I ta'en due Care
Such Anſwers ſhould be given as would induce
One of leſs Faith than *Xuthus* to expect
An Heir of his own Family.

PYTHIA.

The Boy,
Knows he of thy Intentions?

ALETES.

No, nor muſt
Till ripening Time permit. His Fate depends
Upon his Ignorance.—Soft, who comes here?

PYTHIA.

It is the warm old Man, and, as I think,
Some fair Attendant of the Queen. Retire.
I would know more, but—Wherefore do'ſt thou gaze
So ardently upon them?

ALETES.

Hence, away,
We muſt not now be ſeen. [*Exeunt* Pythia *and* Aletes.

Enter LYCEA *and* PHORBAS.

LYCEA.

This Place ſeems quite retir'd. Here if thou wait

I will

I will inform the Queen, and her Impatience
Will bring her on the Inſtant. Surely, *Phorbas*,
Something myſterious lurks beneath her Tears;
Her ſtrange Anxieties. Since thou wer't abſent
This unknown Youth alone has fill'd her Thoughts,
Of him alone ſhe talks, recounts his Words,
Deſcribes his Looks, his Geſtures; loves to dwell
On each Particular. Ere thou wer't gone
She wiſh'd and even expected thy Return;
Diſpatch'd me often, tho' ſhe knew 'twas vain,
To watch for thy Arrival. When the King
Approach'd, ſhe ſmooth'd her Brow, as if to hide
The Strugglings of her Mind; nay ſeem'd afraid
He ſhould ſuſpect her Sorrows.

PHORBAS.

Then to him
She mention'd not this Youth?

LYCEA.

Her Conduct there
Was moſt myſterious. With a Voice of Fear,
She ſlightly dropp'd that ſhe had ſeen a Youth
Whom ſhe could wiſh to bear with her to *Athens*.
The King conſented, and with Smiles propos'd
They ſhould adopt him.

PHORBAS.

Ha! adopt him, ſaid'ſt thou?

LYCEA.

In Sport he ſpake, but at his Words a Glow
Of ſudden Joy ſpread o'er her Face, her Tongue
Forgot Reſtraint, and in his Praiſe grew laviſh:
Then ſtopp'd again, and heſitating ſtrove
To check its Zeal, as fearful to betray
Some hidden Tranſport.

PHORBAS.

Whatſoe'er it be,
I ſoon ſhall damp her Joy. This Youth, *Lycea*,
Muſt not to *Athens*.—But behold, the Queen.

LYCEA.

O how impatient! ere I could return
To tell her thou wer't here, ſhe comes herſelf,
Eager to learn thy Tidings.

Enter CREUSA.

CREUSA.

Now, my *Phorbas*,
Say what thou know'ſt at once. The King already
Conſents he ſhould attend us.

PHORBAS.

Never, never
Shall *Athens* ſee that Youth.

CREUSA.

What mean'ſt thou, *Phorbas*?

PHORBAS.

Too much already of *Æolian* Blood
Has hapleſs *Athens* known.

CREUSA.

Æolian Blood!

PHORBAS.

The King conſents! I doubt not his Conſent.
—Yes, 'twas my Word, great Queen, *Æolian* Blood;
This Youth deſcends from *Æolus*.

CREUSA.

Be dumb,
Or bring me better Tidings.

PHORBAS,

Worſe I cannot,
But what I ſpeak is Truth.

CREUSA.

CREUSA.

Peace, Monſter, Peace!
Thou know'ſt not Truth. 'Tis thy affected Zeal
For *Athens*, for thy Country, that ſuggeſts
This horrid Falſhood; 'tis thy Hate of *Xuthus*.

PHORBAS.

What means my Queen? or how have I deſerv'd
Such harſh Expreſſions? Does my honeſt Love
For *Athens*, and *Creuſa*, ſubject me
To ſuch unkind Suſpicions?

CREUSA.

Gracious Gods!
It cannot be.——Alas, forgive me, *Phorbas*,
I know not what I ſay, thy Words ſtrike thro' me,
They pierce my very Soul. O I had hop'd——
But tell me all, tho' I believe thee honeſt,
Thy Zeal for *Athens*, and for me, may make thee
Too haſty of Belief. Why art thou ſilent?

PHORBAS.

Amazement ſtops my Tongue, theſe Starts of Paſſion,
This Violence of Grief, muſt have a Cauſe.

CREUSA.

Perhaps they have, perhaps to thee, good *Phorbas*,
This burſting Heart may open all its Sorrows.
But tell me firſt, what are thy Proofs? from whence
Gain'dſt thou this curs'd Intelligence?

PHORBAS.

O Queen,
Thy Looks, thy Words——I know not how to anſwer.
Yet if there be Offence in what I ſpeak,
My Ignorance offends, not I offend.
Know then, *Creuſa*, from the Prieſts who 'tend

This

This *Delphic* Shrine, by your Command I learnt
My firſt Intelligence.

CREUSA.

And did they ſay
This Youth was of *Æolian* Race?

PHORBAS.

They did.
At leaſt their Words imported little leſs.
They judg'd me *Xuthus'* Friend, not Enemy,
As would thy Rage ſuggeſt, and as a Friend
Dropp'd Hints they thought would pleaſe me.

CREUSA.

Then, perhaps,
It was not Truth they ſpake, they but deceiv'd
Thy Ear with well-judg'd Flattery.

PHORBAS.

What follow'd
Confirm'd it Truth. Has the King mention'd to thee
What Promiſes were given him at the Shrine
Of ſage *Trophonius?*

CREUSA.

General Promiſes
Of ſure Succeſs, no more.

PHORBAS.

Know then, great Queen,
As I return'd from Converſe with the Prieſts,
I met his Friend and Boſom Fav'rite *Lycon.*
Joy ſparkled in his Eyes, and his vain Tongue
O'erflow'd with Tranſport. I obſerv'd it well,
And gave the Torrent Paſſage, nay with Art
Ev'n led it blindly forward. Till at length
He open'd his whole Soul, and under Seal
Of firmeſt Secrecy told me the King

Would

Would find an Heir at *Delphi*, ſuch an Heir
As would rejoice the unapparent Shades
Of his great Anceſtors. At that I ſtarted.
He found his Error then, and told me, glozing,
That great *Trophonius* had *almoſt* proclaim'd,
Tho' not expreſsly, *Xuthus* here ſhould find
An Heir of his own Race.

CREUSA.

Of his own Race?

PHORBAS.

So ſaid he; whether great *Trophonius* ſpake
This Oracle, I know not; but I know
Too well whoſe Oracle to me declar'd it.

CREUSA.

Think'ſt thou this Youth——

PHORBAS.

Grant it were only done
To try my Zeal, why ſhould they try it now,
Unleſs ſome cloſe Deſign requir'd that Trial?
Yes, mighty Queen, I do believe this Youth
Is our intended King. But, by yon Heaven,
If it be he, or any other He
Of *Xuthus'* Race, he ſhall not reign in *Athens*,
This Poinard firſt ſhall drink his Blood.

CREUSA.

Forbear!
That Thought diſtracts me.—Tho' perhaps 'tis juſt.
——O *Phorbas*, 'twas my Hope, my Wiſh, my Prayer
That Youth might reign in *Athens*. But thy Words
Strike deadly Damps like baleful Aconite,
And poiſon all within.

PHORBAS.

What means my Queen?

CREUSA.

CREUSA.

O *Phorbas*, O *Lycea* — but firſt ſwear
By *Nemeſis* and the tremendous Powers
Who puniſh broken Faith, no Word, no Hint
Shall 'ſcape your Lips of all your Queen declares.

BOTH.

We ſwear!

CREUSA.

Know then, O Pain to Memory!
I had a Son.

PHORBAS.

A Son!

LYCEA.

Good Heaven!

PHORBAS.

A Son!

CREUSA.

O my full Heart! Thy Mother, my *Lycea*,
Knew all the fatal Proceſs of my Woes,
And was their only Solace. *Phorbas*, yes,
I had a Son, but witneſs every God
Whoſe genial Power preſides o'er nuptial Leagues,
Nicander was my wedded Lord. That Night,
That fatal Night which drove him forth from *Athens*,
Forc'd from my ſwelling Womb, ere yet mature,
Its precious Burthen. To thy Mother's Cares
I ow'd my Life. In ſecret ſhe aſſuag'd
My piercing Pangs, and to *Nicander*'s Arms
In ſecret ſhe convey'd the wretched Infant.
What follow'd well thou know'ſt. *Nicander* fell,
And with him doubtleſs fell the dear, dear Charge,
Conſign'd to his Protection. Yet, good *Phorbas*,
When I beheld this Youth, his Looks, his Voice,

His

His Age, his unknown Birth, all, all conſpir'd
To cheat me into Hopes. Alas, how fallen!
How blaſted all!

PHORBAS.

Great Queen, my Tears confeſs,
An old Man's Tears, which rarely fall, confeſs
How much I ſhare your Anguiſh. Had I known
Nicander was your Lord, by Earth and Heaven,
I would have rais'd all *Athens* in his Cauſe,
Nay, been a Rebel to the beſt of Maſters,
Ere the dear Pledge of your unſpotted Loves
Should thus have fallen untimely. Now, alas,
I have not ev'n one flattering Hope to give thee.
Till now I oft have wonder'd why ſo far
Their Rage purſued *Nicander*. 'Tis too plain,
They knew the precious Burthen which he bore,
And for the hapleſs Child the Father died.

CREUSA.

O God! I feel the Truth of what thou utter'ſt,
And my Heart dies within me. O *Lycea*,
Who, who would be a Mother!

PHORBAS.

Be a Queen,
And turn thy Grief to Rage. Shall Aliens ſport
With thy Misfortunes? Shall inſulting Spoilers
Smile o'er the Ruins of thy hapleſs State,
While all the golden Harveſt is their own?
Shall *Xuthus* triumph? ſhall his Race ſucceed?
While thine, I mean not to provoke thy Tears,
Thy tender Bloſſoms are torn rudely off
Almoſt or ere they bloom.

CREUSA.

It ſhall not be,
No, ye immortal Powers! —— Yet let us wait
Till the dire Truth glare on us. One ſhort Hour
And Doubt ſhall be no more. Then, *Phorbas*, then
Should he preſume to place on *Athens'* Throne
His alien Race, nay tho' this beauteous Youth,
This dear Reſemblance of my murder'd Lord,
Should be the fatal Choice, by that dear Shade,
Which periſh'd, as it reach'd the Gates of Life,
I will, I think I will, aſſiſt thy Vengeance.
—Soft, who comes here? 'Tis he! how innocent!
How winning ſoft he looks! Whate'er it be,
He knows not the Deceit. Look on him, *Phorbas*;
Nay, thou ſhalt queſtion him.

PHORBAS.

Not I. Great Queen,
Reſume yourſelf, nor let this fond Perſuaſion
Betray you to a Weakneſs you ſhould bluſh at.

CREUSA.

If poſſible I will.

Enter ILYSSUS.

ILYSSUS.

Illuſtrious Queen,
The Altar ſtands prepar'd, and all Things wait
Your Royal Preſence: From the King I come,
His Meſſenger.

CREUSA.

We will attend his Pleaſure.
Be near me, *Phorbas*; I may want thy Counſel.

ILYSSUS.

She looks not on me ſure as ſhe was wont.
I'll ſpeak to her. Permit me, gracious Queen,

To

To pay my humbleſt Thanks, for by your means
The King is kind as you are.

CREUSA.

Riſe, *Ilyſſus.*
Perhaps you needed there no Advocate.
Phorbas, lead on. My Reſolution melts,
And all my Sex returns. One Look from him
Outweighs a thouſand Proofs. *Phorbas*, lead on,
Or I am loſt in Weakneſs. [*Exeunt* Creuſa *and* Phorbas.

ILYSSUS, *ſtopping* Lycea.

Gentle Maid,
Stay yet a Moment. Wherefore does the Queen
Look coldly on me? Know'ſt thou if in ought
I have offended?

LYCEA.

Things of mightieſt Import
At preſent fill her Mind, nor leave they room
For leſs Affairs. My Duty calls me hence. [*Exit.*

ILYSSUS.

I hope it is no more; yet each Appearance
Alarms me now. *Aletes*, thou haſt rais'd
Such Conflicts here, ſuch Hopes, ſuch Fears, ſuch Doubts,
That Apprehenſion ſinks beneath their Weight.
Well might'ſt thou ſay theſe ſolitary Shades
Have now no Peace for me. Yet once thou taught'ſt me,
That the pure Mind was its own Source of Peace.
But that Philoſophy I find belongs
To private Life, for where Ambition enters
I feel it is not true. [*Exit.*

The End of the Second ACT.

ACT III.

The Veſtibule of the Temple.

ALETES *alone.*

WHY ſhould I doubt? it will, it muſt ſucceed.
Yet I could wiſh that I had ſeen *Creuſa*
Before 'twas undertaken, for perhaps——
'Tis better as it is. Her Part had then
Been difficult to act; now what ſhe does,
Aſſiſting or oppoſing the Deſign,
Will all ſeem natural.—The *Pythia* ſure
Will act as I directed.——Hark, the Rites
Should be ere this perform'd; why ſtay they then?
——That Noiſe proclaims them finiſh'd, and the Croud
Will ſoon be here.——They come, I muſt not yet
Be ſeen; the *Pythia* in the Laurel Grove
May tell me what has paſs'd. [*Exit.*

CREUSA *deſcends haſtily from the Temple in great Diſorder,* LYCEA *following.*

LYCEA.

Stay, mighty Queen,
You know not what you do; your Rage tranſports you;
You leave the Rites unfiniſh'd, and the Croud
In wild Amazement gaze on your Departure.

CREUSA.

I will not ſtay, nor will I tamely bear

My

My diſappointed Hopes. O honeſt *Phorbas*,
O good old Man, thy penetrating Mind
Saw early their Deſigns. 'Tis to ſupply
Nicander's Loſs (O ne'er to be ſupply'd!)
That we muſt call in Strangers to the Throne,
And yield our Scepters to *Æolian* Hands.
——Yes, ye great Shades of my Progenitors,
I hear ye call, ye ſhall, ye ſhall have Vengeance!

LYCEA.

Whatever you deſign, conceal at leaſt
This Tranſport of your Rage.

CREUSA.

Why loiters *Phorbas*?
He ſaw my Anguiſh, wherefore comes he not
To its Relief? They fool me paſt Endurance.
Rely they on the Weakneſs of my Sex?
Lycea, they ſhall find this feeble Arm
In ſuch a Cauſe can lay the Diſtaff by,
And graſp th' unerring Thunderbolt of *Jove*.
O *Phorbas*, art thou come?

Enter PHORBAS *from the Temple.*

PHORBAS.

Now, mighty Queen,
Are my Suſpicions juſt? is *Phorbas* honeſt?

CREUSA.

As Light, as Truth itſelf. My Counſellor,
My Boſom Friend!

PHORBAS.

Now ſhall a caſual Likeneſs,
If ſuch there be, a ſemblant Caſt of Features,
The Sport of Nature in a human Form,
Shall Trifles light as theſe weigh down Conviction?
O Queen, from firſt to laſt th' apparent Scheme

Glares

Glares on us now. Why were we brought to *Delphi*,
But that this Youth has long been nurtur'd here
In ſecret from the World; perhaps the Son
Of *Xuthus'* ſelf, plac'd here at firſt to hide
The Guilt and Shame of ſome diſhoneſt Mother,
Tho' now applied to more pernicious Ends.

CREUSA.

It may be ſo.

PHORBAS.

And why, ſay why, to-day,
While *Xuthus* ſtays behind for Oracles
He wanted not, is young *Ilyſſus* bid
To meet your Eyes, and win with artful Tales
Your eaſy Heart?

CREUSA.

Bid! was he bid to do it?

PHORBAS.

I ſaw the Prieſteſs whiſper ſomething to him,
Then loud ſhe bade him wait for thy Approach.
She muſt, forſooth, retire to ſacred Glooms,
And wait for Inſpiration. *Xuthus'* Gold
Was what inſpir'd the Traitreſs. Yet, good Heaven,
When from the Shrine ſhe gave the fraudful Words,
With what ſtrange Art the holy Hypocrite
In mimic Trances died!—"A baniſh'd Youth
"Is *Athens'* Cauſe of Woe." Too truly ſaid,
Tho' for a wicked Purpoſe, to allure
Thy eaſy Faith, and lead thee to admit
The Fraud which follow'd.

CREUSA.

Never, never, *Phorbas*,
Will I that Fraud admit. How readily
Did *Xuthus*, when my fooliſh Fondneſs aſk'd it,

Conſent

Consent to my Request! * Thou heard'st him say [* *To* Lycea.
We should adopt this Youth; in seeming Sport
He spake it, but ev'n then th' insulting Tyrant
Couch'd fatal Truths beneath th' ambiguous Phrase.

PHORBAS.

Why should a Youth design'd for Solitude
Be taught the Arts of War? He saw himself
The Impropriety. Who is this Sage
That has instructed him? And why should *Lycon*
O'erflow with sudden Joy, but that he found,
From thy apparent Fondness for the Boy,
Their Schemes grew practicable. Nay, to-day,
When to the Priestess' self my honest Love
For *Athens*, and Dislike of Stranger Kings,
Burst freely forth, she chid my hasty Zeal,
Commended *Xuthus*, talk'd of Piety
And Rev'rence to the Gods: 'Twas to their Priests
She meant, their meddling Priests, who dare presume
To sport with Thrones, to sell their Gods for Gold,
And stamp rank Falshoods with the Seal of Heaven.

LYCEA.

Forbear, you are too loud so near the Temple;
Xuthus himself will hear.

CREUSA.

We would be heard.
Instruct me, *Phorbas*, by what means to crush
This impious Combination.

PHORBAS.

Athens yet
Has honest Hearts. Yes, *Phorbas* yet has Friends
Who dare be Patriots, and prefer their Country
To *Xuthus*' kindest Smile. Some such are here
Ev'n now at *Delphi*. But, illustrious Queen,

We

We muſt with Caution act. The Name of Heaven,
Howe'er uſurp'd, adds Vigour to their Cauſe,
And weakens ours. We might in ſecret find
A ſure Revenge.

CREUSA.

What?

PHORBAS.

Death.

CREUSA.

Of *Xuthus?*

PHORBAS.

His
Might follow, but the more immediate Cauſe
Should earlieſt be remov'd, the Boy.

CREUSA.

The Boy!
Why ſhould he die? Believe me, honeſt *Phorbas*,
He knows not of the Fraud. His every Look
Proclaims his Innocence. If impious Men
Make him their Inſtrument of evil Deeds,
Can he be blam'd? Bred up in Shades, poor Youth,
He never knew the Arts of baſe Mankind,
Nor ſhould he ſhare their Puniſhment.

PHORBAS.

O Queen,
They have too well ſucceeded. This fond Paſſion,
Which their inſidious Cunning firſt inſpir'd,
Clings cloſe about your Heart, and may at laſt
Undo us all. —— But hark, that Noiſe declares
The finiſh'd Rites. Retire we to the Grove,
And there will I enforce ——

CREUSA.

No, let us ſtay.

I will

I will confront this artful Politician,
And ſhew him I am yet a Queen.

PHORBAS.

Perhaps
'Twere better to retire till our full Scheme
Were ripe for Vengeance.—* Yet if we remain,
High Words muſt riſe, which will alarm her Pride
And fit her for my Purpoſe. } * *Aſide.*

Enter XUTHUS, ILYSSUS, *Prieſts, Virgins, Guards, &c. from the Temple.*

XUTHUS, (*coming up to* Creuſa)

Thy Looks, *Creuſa*, thy abrupt Departure
Affronting to the God himſelf, and theſe
His ſacred Miniſters, too plainly ſhew
Irreverent Rage, reſiſting Heaven's high Will.
Nor do'ſt thou want I ſee, unthinking Woman,
Inflamers of thy Folly.—But of this
Enough; behold the Youth whom Heaven deſigns
Thy Heir, and mine.

CREUSA.

My Heir!

XUTHUS.

Thy Heir, *Creuſa.*
What means that haughty Look? Why with Contempt
Do'ſt thou behold him? Is he chang'd, *Creuſa?*
Have a few Hours ſo totally transform'd him?
Is all that winning Grace of which thou ſpak'ſt
Almoſt with Rapture, is that native Charm
Of Innocence all vaniſh'd? Hear him ſpeak,
Hear if he talks leſs ſenſibly than when
Thy pleas'd Attention hung upon his Words,
And lent each Syllable an added Grace.
What haſt thou found, or thy grave Monitor

What has he found, which can ſo ſuddenly
Have wrought this wond'rous Change? Is it becauſe
The Gods have thought with thee that he deſerves
A Crown? or is it that my Will conſents?
And therefore thine, proud Queen, perverſely ſtrives
To combat thy Affections?

CREUSA.

We methinks
Have chang'd Affections. The calm, ſteady *Xuthus*,
Whoſe equal Mind ne'er knew the ſtormy Guſts
Of diſcompoſing Paſſion, now can feel
Indecent Warmth when touch'd by pious Zeal.
Nay he, to whom the tend'rer Sentiments
Seem'd but the Weakneſs of the human Frame,
Now wakes inſpir'd with ſome unuſual Softneſs.
Have Oracles the Power to raiſe at once
The kind Affections? or did he conceal
The ſmother'd Flame, 'till authoris'd by Heaven
It might burſt out unqueſtion'd?

XUTHUS.

Haughty Queen,
I underſtand thee well; thou think'ſt this Youth
A Subſtitute of mine, and dar'ſt affront
Yon awful Shrine, the Fountain of pure Truth.
But by that God who bears the vengeful Bow,
And whoſe large Eye——Yet wherefore ſhould I ſtrive
By Oaths to undeceive thee; Breaſts like mine
Can ſcorn th' imputed Falſhood they deteſt.
Nor am I now to learn from what vile Source
Thy vain Suſpicions riſe. But know, proud Queen,
This Youth ſhall reign in *Athens*; and yet more
To puniſh thy vain Pride, ſince thou provok'ſt it,
I do believe him of *Æolian* Race.

CREUSA.

CREUSA.

Thou do'ſt?

XUTHUS.

I do. A Race as glorious, Queen,
As *Cecrops'* boaſted lineage. For the Youth,
Were I to beg the choiceſt Boon of Heaven
From my own Loins to riſe, I could not hope
A nobler Offspring.

PHORBAS. [*Aſide to* Creuſa.
Hear'ſt thou that?

CREUSA.

I do,
And will revenge the Inſult.

ILYSSUS. [*Kneeling.*
Gracious Queen!
What have I done which ſhould eſtrange thee to me?
Am I the unhappy Cauſe of theſe Diſſentions?

CREUSA.

Kneel not to me, *Ilyſſus.*

XUTHUS.

Kneel not to her;
'Tis I am thy Protector, and thy Friend,
Nay now thy Father.

ILYSSUS.

Yet, O mighty King,
Permit me at her Royal Feet to pay
My humbleſt Duty. If I call thee Father,
She ſure muſt be a Mother.

[*She turns away diſorder'd.*

XUTHUS.

Riſe, *Ilyſſus,*
Thou ſeeſt ſhe ſtands unmov'd.

ILYSSUS.

No, now ſhe ſoftens,
I ſee it in her Eyes.

CREUSA.

I will, I will
Be Miſtreſs of my Soul.—Why kneel'ſt thou, Youth,
I blame not thee.

XUTHUS.

Me then thou blam'ſt, *Creuſa*.
I am the Object of thy Rage. 'Tis *Xuthus*
Thou think'ſt unworthy of th' *Athenian* Throne.

CREUSA.

Athens might well have ſpar'd a foreign Luſtre,
Secure of Fame, had *Xuthus* ne'er been born.

XUTHUS.

Ungrateful Queen, had *Xuthus* ne'er been born
What now had *Athens* been?

CREUSA.

Perhaps in Ruins,
And better ſo than to become the Prey
Of needy wand'ring Strangers.

XUTHUS.

Earth, and Heaven!
This the Return?—I knew thou never loved'ſt me,
Yet, witneſs Heav'n, I raviſh'd not thy Hand,
Thou gav'dſt it ſullenly, but yet thou gav'dſt it;
And I well hop'd thy Female Senſe of Honour,
Of Duty to thy Lord, might have ſecur'd
At leaſt my future Peace. Thy tend'rer Thoughts,
The Wife's beſt Ornament, I knew were buried
In a Plebeian Grave.

CREUSA.

Plebeian Grave?

XUTHUS.

Fool that I was, I flatter'd thy vain Sorrows,

Indulg'd

Indulg'd their weak Exceſs, and rais'd, I find,
Imaginary Rivals in the Tomb.
But never more, *Creuſa*, never more
Shalt thou affront my ill-requited Fondneſs.
I will deſtroy that Pageant of thy Paſſion,
Tear from that Idol Shrine th' inſulting Wreaths,
And cancel thy mock Worſhip.

ILYSSUS.

Gracious Queen,
Retire a while.

CREUSA.

Be gone.——Inſulting Tyrant,
Touch but a Wreath that's ſacred to *Nicander*,
And by pale *Hecate*'s awful Rites I ſwear
Thy Life ſhall pay the Forfeit; nay the Lives
Of thy whole daſtard Race.——Plebeian Grave!
Had that Plebeian liv'd, Imperial *Xuthus*
Had crouch'd beneath his Feet.

XUTHUS.

O would to Heaven
This ſcepter'd Arm could raiſe him from the Earth,
That thou might'ſt ſee how infamous a Slave
Thou dar'ſt prefer to *Xuthus*.——Come, *Ilyſſus*,
We leave her to her Follies. Look not on her,
She merits not thy Tenderneſs. Away.
If Reaſon ſhould again reſume its Seat
We may expect her at the Banquet. Come,
All here muſt be our Gueſts.

[*Exeunt* Xuthus, Ilyſſus, *&c.*

[Creuſa, Phorbas, *and* Lycea *ſtay.*

PHORBAS.

Curb not thy Paſſion, give it Vent, great Queen,
And let it burſt in Thunder on thy Foes.

CREUSA.

CREUSA.

It ſhall, by Heaven it ſhall.——I thought till now
My Griefs were ſacred, but this Monſter dares
Inſult even Miſery itſelf.——O *Phorbas*,
Forgive me if my Tears will force a Paſſage.——
Now, they are gone, and I will weep no more.
Come, faithful Counſellor of Vengeance, come,
Inſtruct me how to act, ſteel all my Soul;
Let not Remorſe or Pity's Coward Voice,
The Bane of noble Deeds, intrude to croſs us.
Nicander's injur'd Ghoſt ſhall aid our Counſels.
Say, ſhall he die?

PHORBAS.

Not yet, firſt be his Schemes
Abortive all, his politic Deſigns,
Then let him die deſpis'd.

CREUSA.

Agreed; but how?

PHORBAS.

Now at the Banquet may we cruſh at once
His full blown hopes. The fatal Cauſe remov'd,
Th' Effect of courſe muſt ceaſe.

CREUSA.

What Cauſe?

PHORBAS.

The Boy.
I ſee thou ſhudder'ſt at it: but, great Queen,
Hear but the cogent Reaſons I ſhall offer
And thou wilt think as I do. For the Boy
Heav'n knows I wiſh to ſpare him, but no Means
No earthly Means but this can curſe compleatly
This politic Deſigner. Doubtleſs long
This fav'rite Scheme to place on *Athens*' Throne

His

His hated Race, has labour'd in his Breaſt,
And all his Hours employ'd. On this alone
He builds the firm Foundation of his Peace,
His Happineſs to come. His Death were nothing,
He knows his Friends, the Minions of his Fortune,
He knows all *Greece*, ſuch is their Dread and Awe
Of *Delphi*'s Shrine, will join in the Support
Of this deceitful Claim; and that firm Hope
Will make him triumph ev'n in Death, and laugh
At our too ſhallow Vengeance.

CREUSA.

Laugh he ſhall not.
No, I will puniſh home.

PHORBAS.

You cannot puniſh
By any Means but this. And know, great Queen,
I have a Poiſon of ſuch ſubtile Force,
(Why do'ſt thou ſtart?) of ſuch amazing Strength,
Yet ſo peculiar in its Operation,
That it ſhall ſeem the Surfeit of the Feaſt,
Not we have done the Deed. At leaſt ſhall ſeem ſo
To all but *Xuthus*' ſelf; for he methinks
Should know the Truth, at leaſt ſuſpect it ſtrongly,
And yet not dare Revenge.

CREUSA.

I cannot bear it;
Howe'er we fail in our Revenge; my *Phorbas*,
The Boy muſt live.

PHORBAS.

Good Heav'n! is this *Creuſa*?
Is this the vengeful Queen who would not hear
Remorſe or Pity's Voice?—Farewel then *Athens*;
Yes, my poor Country, thou muſt ſink enſlav'd

To

To foreign Tyrants. She who ſhould defend
Thy Rights, thy Liberties, ſtands tamely by
And ſees the Yoke impos'd, nay ſmiles to ſee it:
Thy Queen, the laſt of her illuſtrious Line,
Conſents to thy Deſtruction.

CREUSA.

Never, *Phorbas.*
Do what thou wilt. With this laſt parting Pang
I give him to thy Rage.—Yet oh, beware
I ſee him not again. One Look from him
Would baffle all thy Schemes.

PHORBAS.

Now at the Banquet
Will we infuſe the Draught, ev'n in the Cup
Which the King's ſelf preſents to his young Heir
In Token of Election.

CREUSA.

Stay, good *Phorbas.*

PHORBAS.

Already have I for the juſt Deſign
Suborn'd a faithful Slave. Nay, ſhould it fail,
I have a truſty Band, a choſen few,
Athenian Souls who ſcorn to bow the Knee
To any foreign Lord; theſe will I place
At the Pavilion Doors, if need require,
To ſecond our Attempt.

CREUSA.

Yet ſtay, good *Phorbas.*
How kindly did he ſeem to ſympathize
With my Diſtreſs! nay almoſt chid the King,
When his loud Rage——

PHORBAS.

He had been taught his Leſſon.

'Twas

'Twas all Design, all Artifice to work
Upon a Woman's Weakneſs.

CREUSA.

Think'ſt thou ſo?

PHORBAS,

I do. But, O my Queen, be more than Woman,
Conquer this Foible of thy Sex.

CREUSA.

Heav'n knows
How much it coſts to do it.—Go then, *Phorbas*,
I cannot bid thee proſper. [*Exit* Phorbas.
O *Lycea*,
Thou know'ſt not what I feel.—Haſte, call him back.—
No, ſtay—I think the Bitterneſs is paſt,
And I can bear it now. Lend me thy Arm,
I would retire, *Lycea*.—Yet from what
Should I retire? I cannot from myſelf!—
O Boy, thou art reveng'd; whate'er thou ſuffer'ſt
Is light, to what thy Murd'reſs feels! [*Exeunt*.

The End of the Third ACT.

ACT IV.

The Laurel Grove.

PHORBAS *and Athenians.*

PHORBAS.

THIS Way, my Friends; at the Pavilion Doors
Stand ready arm'd, that if we need your Aid
You may obſerve the Sign, and cruſh at once
Theſe vile Uſurpers on the Rights of *Athens*.
I hope we want ye not.—I muſt be hid
A while, leſt *Xuthus* ſhould ſuſpect my Preſence.
The Queen too may repent, I'll therefore ſhun her } *Aſide.*
Till the Deed's done, irrevocably done.
—But ſtir not till I come.—What Noiſe is that?
Retire, my Friends, the Temple's Poſtern Door
Grates on its Hinge.—Be ſecret, and we proſper.

[*Exeunt ſeverally.*

Enter ALETES *and* PYTHIA.

ALETES.

This Quarrel was unlucky. A ſlight Breach
Had lent my Purpoſe Strength; but wrought thus high
It may defeat our Hopes. She cannot now
With Eaſe recede from her too raſh Reſolves,
At leaſt not unſuſpected. Did ſhe, ſay'ſt thou,
Reject thy Meſſage?

PYTHIA.

PYTHIA.

Scarcely did she pay
The decent Dues my sacred Office claims.
And when I prest her more, with sullen Pride
She silently withdrew.

ALETES.

See her I must.
Where went she?

PYTHIA.

To the Shades which over-hang
Th' Aonian Fount.

ALETES.

I will pursue her thither.

PYTHIA.

It may not be, for now I know thy Secret
'Tis my turn to be prudent, Know'st thou not
Thou should'st be cautious, nor expose thyself
To prying Eyes? I heard her, as she pass'd,
In broken Whispers bid *Lycea* haste
To *Phorbas*, and inform that trusty Friend
That she would wait him in the Laurel Grove.
Here then thou may'st surprise them both, and crown
At once thy whole Design.

ALETES.

Thou counsell'st well,
And I will guide me by thy kind Advice.
O *Pythia*, how did every thing conspire
To give me hopes that I should place the Boy
Secure on *Athens'* Throne, unknown to all
But those whom Fate had made his firmest Friends.
The very Means I us'd to make it sure
Have been most adverse to the Cause I labour'd.
Had I relied on *Xuthus'* Piety,

Nor mention'd *Æolus*, Succeſs were mine.
And let me hope it ſtill. What moſt I fear
Is the Queen's Warmth of Paſſion. To which end
I muſt proceed with Tenderneſs, and hide
For ſome ſhort time *Ilyſſus* from her Knowledge.
I have unnumber'd Cautions to premiſe
Which her o'erflowing Joy may haply ruin.
The Banquet, is it ready?

PYTHIA.

It has long
In vain expected its illuſtrious Gueſts.
The King already has forgot his Rage,
And hopes returning Thought may move the Queen
To equal Amity: He therefore finds
Continual Cauſes to delay the Feaſt.

ALETES.

Retire. Perhaps 'tis ſhe; I hear the Steps
Of ſome who move this way. [*Exit* Pythia.
What means he here?
Why art thou abſent from the Banquet, Youth?

Enter ILYSSUS.

ILYSSUS.

It has no Joys for me. I fear, *Aletes*,
Thou and the *Pythia* have moſt foully play'd
For my Advancement.

ALETES.

Ha!

ILYSSUS.

Where are the Parents
Whom thou didſt promiſe to my Hopes? Alas
I find no Parents here, no kind Regards,
No inexpreſſive Fondneſs. Stern Debate,
And foul Diſſention kindle here their Torch
To uſher in my Greatneſs. Ev'n *Creuſa*,

Whoſe

Whoſe Tenderneſs I know not how alarm'd
My throbbing Heart with Hopes, and Doubts, and Fears,
Unfelt before, ev'n ſhe has taught her Eyes
To look with Strangeneſs on me. The good King,
Who yet withdraws not his Protection from me,
Seems loſt in anxious Thought.—Unkind *Aletes*,
Art thou the Cauſe of this? Say, am I ſprung
Of Race *Æolian*? For by Heaven I ſwear,
By that pure Fountain of immortal Truth,
I will not brook Deceit. I will again,
Howe'er the glitt'ring Miſchief tempt my Youth,
Become that humble unknown Thing I was,
Rather than wear a Crown by Falſhood gain'd.
Speak then, and give me Eaſe.

ALETES.

My deareſt Boy——

His Virtue charms me, tho' it may prevent
His own Succeſs. O happy, happy *Athens*,
To gain a King like him, whoſe honeſt Soul
Starts at imagin'd Fraud! *Aſide.*

ILYSSUS.

Speak on, *Aletes*,
And do not by that Look of Tenderneſs,
And murm'ring to thyſelf, alarm me more.

ALETES.

What ſhould I ſpeak? This very Morn, *Ilyſſus*,
This very Morn I told thee a few Hours
Would ſhew thee what thou wert; but thy Impatience
Brooks not that ſhort Delay. It ſeems *Aletes*
Has loſt his uſual Credit with *Ilyſſus*,
Ev'n with the Youth his anxious Care has form'd.
Think'ſt thou the Man who taught thy feeling Heart
To ſtart at Falſhood, would himſelf commit

The Fraud thou ſhudder'ſt at? What have I done,
Which ſhould induce thee to a Thought ſo baſe?
Did e'er my Precepts contradict my Heart?
Did I e'er teach a Virtue I not practis'd?
—I ſee thou art confounded. Know then, Youth,
I blame not thy Impatience, nay I praiſe
That Modeſty which can ſo ſoon reſume
Its Seat, when all things round are big with Wonder.
Ere Night thou ſhalt know all; till then, *Ilyſſus*,
Behave as *Athens'* King.

ILYSSUS.

O good *Aletes*,
Forgive my Raſhneſs. Yes, I know thee honeſt
As Truth itſelf, and know the wond'rous Debt
I owe thy Goodneſs. Yet, if thou confeſs
That I have Reaſon for theſe anxious Cares,
Thou wilt permit me ſtill to queſtion thee.
Nay look upon me whilſt I ſpeak to thee.
Perhaps thou haſt ſome ſecret Cauſe, *Aletes*,
For all that kind Attention thou haſt ſhewn me,
From Infancy till now? Why do'ſt thou turn
Thy Eyes to Earth? 'Tis plain thou haſt a Cauſe:
Thou know'ſt from whom I ſpring; how can'ſt thou elſe
With Confidence aſſert, that yet ere Night
I ſhall know all?—Say this at leaſt, *Aletes*,
Shall the Queen's Anger ceaſe?

ALETES.

It ſhall, *Ilyſſus*.
Ev'n now I wait her here; on what Deſign
I muſt not yet inform thee. The next Time
Thou ſhalt behold her thou wilt find a Change
Incredible indeed, from Rage to Fondneſs,
From cold Reſerve to Tears of burſting Joy.

[Ilyſſus *is going to ſpeak eagerly.*

——Aſk

—Aſk me no more.—Yet ſomething didſt thou ſay
Relating to the Cauſe which fix'd me here
Thy Guardian, thy Inſtructor, and——the Time
Will come, when thou ſhalt know it all, *Ilyſſus*,
And bleſs my Memory.

ILYSSUS.

Thou weep'ſt, *Aletes*.
My Tears will mingle too.

ALETES.

Forbear, and leave me.
Yet ſtay a while, for now perhaps we part
To meet no more.

ILYSSUS.

No more! Thou wilt not leave me
When moſt I want thy Care! 'Twas my firſt Thought,
'Twas the firſt Boon I aſk'd of the good King,
That thou might'ſt be my kind Inſtructor ſtill.
He prais'd my Gratitude, and I had promis'd
To bring him to thy Cottage. He himſelf
Shall be a Suitor to thee.

ALETES.

Thou haſt aſk'd
Thou know'ſt not what: It cannot be, *Ilyſſus*,
That *Xuthus* and *Aletes* e'er ſhould meet
On terms of Amity. The Smiles of Greatneſs
To me have loſt their Value. For thy Love
I could do much, and to be ſever'd from thee
Pulls at my Heart-ſtrings. But reſiſtleſs Fate
Has fix'd its Seal, and we muſt part for ever,
How hard ſoe'er it ſeem. Thy Youth will ſoon,
Amidſt the buſy Scenes of active Greatneſs,
Forget its Monitor: But I muſt bear
In hopeleſs Solitude the Pangs of Abſence

Till Thought ſhall be no more.

ILYSSUS.

O heav'nly Powers
Then there is ſomething dreadful yet conceal'd.
I cannot part from thee in Ignorance.
Tell me, *Aletes*,

ALETES.

Would I could! But now
It muſt not be.—Haſte to the Banquet, Youth,
Thy Duty calls thee thither.

ILYSSUS.

Go I cannot,
Till thou aſſur'ſt me we ſhall meet again.

ALETES.

If poſſible we will. If not, remember,
When thou ſhalt know thyſelf, that on thyſelf
Thy Fate depends; that Virtue, Glory, Happineſs,
Are cloſe connected, and their ſad Reverſe
Is Vice, is Pain, is Infamy.—Alas!
Theſe were the Leſſons of thy private Life,
This I have told thee oft, but my fond Tongue
Runs o'er its former Precepts, and forgets
Thou now muſt mount a Throne; a larger Scene
Of Duty opens.

ILYSSUS.

Yet the tender Friend,
Who ſhould direct me, leaves me to myſelf.
Can'ſt thou abandon me?

ALETES.

Would Fate permit
I would attend thee ſtill. But oh, *Ilyſſus*,
Whate'er becomes of me, when thou ſhall reach
That envied Pinacle of earthly Greatneſs,

Where

Where faithful Monitors but rarely follow,
Ev'n there, amidſt the kindeſt Smiles of Fortune,
Forget not thou wert once diſtreſs'd and friendleſs.
Be ſtrictly juſt; but yet, like Heaven, with Mercy
Temper thy Juſtice. From thy purged Ear
Baniſh baſe Flattery, and ſpurn the Wretch
Who would perſuade thee thou art more than Man;
Weak, erring, ſelfiſh Man, endued with Power
To be the Miniſter of public Good.
If Conqueſt charm thee, and the Pride of War
Blaze on thy Sight, remember thou art placed
The Guardian of Mankind, nor build thy Fame
On Rapines, and on Murders. Should ſoft Peace
Invite to Luxury, the pleaſing Bane
Of happy Kingdoms, know from thy Example
The Bliſs or Woe of nameleſs Millions ſprings,
Their Virtue, or their Vice. Nor think by Laws
To curb licentious Man; thoſe Laws alone
Can bend the headſtrong Many to their Yoke,
Which make it preſent Int'reſt to obey them.
O Boy! ——

Enter PYTHIA *haſtily.*

PYTHIA.

Ilyſſus! wherefore art thou here?
The King expects thee, and the Banquet waits.

ILYSSUS.

I cannot go.

ALETES.

Thou muſt; thy Fate depends
Upon thy Abſence now. The Queen approaches.
After the Banquet I again will ſee thee,
And thou ſhalt know the whole. I will by Heaven.

[*Exit* Ilyſſus.

Pythia away, and wait me in the Temple.

[*Exit* Pythia.

She ſaw them not; on her contracted Brow
Sits brooding Care. She ſpeaks! My Heart beats thick,
And my Tongue trembles to perform its Office.
Now Fate attend, and perfect thine own Work!

Enter CREUSA.

CREUSA.

To what have I conſented!—Ha! who art thou
That thus intrud'ſt on ſacred Privacy,
When the o'erburthen'd Mind unloads its Griefs,
Its hoarded Miſeries.

ALETES.

Thy better Genius!

CREUSA.

That Voice is ſure familiar to my Ear!
Who art thou, ſpeak.

ALETES.

One whom Adverſity
Has taught to know himſelf. I bring thee tidings
Of an unhappy Man who wrong'd thee much,
But much repented of the Wrongs he did thee;
Of thy *Nicander*, Queen.

CREUSA.

Nicander, ſay'ſt thou?
O then thou art indeed my better Genius.

ALETES.

Now, arm thy Soul for Wonders yet to come!
Perhaps he lives.

CREUSA.

He lives? [*Looking on him with Amazement.*

ALETES. [*After great Irresolution and Struggles with himself.*

Behold him here! [*She faints.*

—What has my Rashness done?——The Blush of Life
Has left her Cheek, the Pulse forgets to move.
Where shall I turn? I cannot call for Aid,
Nor can I leave her thus.——She breathes, she stirs!
—Yes, yes, *Creusa*, thy *Nicander* lives,
And he will catch at least this dear Embrace
Tho' now thou art another's.

CREUSA.

Gracious Gods!
It is, it is *Nicander*, 'tis my Lord!
O I am only thine, no Power on Earth
Shall e'er divide us more.
—It cannot be, my Senses all deceive me——
And yet it is.——O let me gaze upon thee,
Recall each Trace which marks thee for my own,
And gives me back the Image of my Heart.
How Time and Grief have chang'd thee! But my Love
Can know no Change. My Lord, my Life, my Husband!
Where hast thou wander'd? how hast thou been hid
From Love's all-piercing Sight? the bloody Ruffians,
How didst thou 'scape their Rage? or did they wreak
Upon the helpless Innocent alone
Their impious Vengeance?

NICANDER.

Nor on me, nor him
Did Vengeance fall.

CREUSA.

Does he too live?

NICANDER.

He does.

CREUSA. [*Aside.*

O honeſt *Phorbas!* Murder now is Virtue.

NICANDER.

The fabled Murder was all Stratagem
Contriv'd for thy dear ſake; no impious Ruffians
Purſued our Steps, I found that I had wrong'd thee
Beyond redreſs, nor knew another means
But by my Death to ſave thee from Diſhonor.
Deſpair I thought might conquer Love, and thou
Once more be *Athens'* Pride. The precious Charge
Forbad a real Death, I therefore ſtain'd
With Blood my well-known Garments, which produc'd.—

CREUSA.

A curſt'd Effect. — But I have nearer Fears.
How cam'ſt thou hither? wherefore to theſe Shades?
The Boy, where is he?

NICANDER.

Far from hence ——

CREUSA.

Thank Heaven!

NICANDER.

He lives in Peace and Safety. — What diſturbs thee?

CREUSA.

Nothing— I dare not tell him what I feared,
His honeſt Breaſt might ſhudder at the Guilt,
Tho' now it be more needful. — The dear Boy,
Say, is he brave?

NICANDER.

As Woman could deſire.

CREUSA.

And form'd like thee?

NICANDER.

His Perſon far exceeds

What

What my moſt vig'rous Youth could boaſt, *Creuſa.*
And his firm Mind is Wiſdom's aged Strength
With all Youth's Graces ſoften'd.

CREUSA.

'Tis too much.
O happy Mother! Call'ſt thou him *Nicander*?

NICANDER.

No, *Ion*, 'twas the Name the Matron choſe,
Who gave him to my Care.

CREUSA.

Then *Ion* be it.
Ion ſhall reign in *Athens*. Know'ſt thou, Love,
The curs'd Deſign which this *Æolian* here,
And the vile Maid —

NICANDER.

The Prieſteſs, it ſhould ſeem,
With *Xuthus* has conſpir'd to fix his Race
On *Athens'* Throne.

CREUSA.

But never ſhall his Race
That Scepter wield.

NICANDER.

It never ſhall, *Creuſa.*
I have a Means —

CREUSA. [*Aſide.*

My Means, thank Heaven, is ſurer.

NICANDER.

But I will tell thee all from firſt to laſt.
Hear then and weigh my Words, for Fate is in them.
Xuthus, th' *Athenian* King —

CREUSA.

I think not of him.

NICANDER

NICANDER.

Beware of that. Whate'er thou think'ſt, *Creuſa*,
Xuthus muſt ſtill reign on, thy Lord and Huſband.

CREUSA.

Xuthus my Lord! then what art thou, *Nicander*?
Do'ſt thou deſpiſe me for a Crime thyſelf
Haſt forc'd me to commit? My Soul was thine
Ev'n when I gave my Hand, and ſtill remains
Untainted, undefil'd.

NICANDER.

I know it well,
Thou deareſt, beſt of Women.——My torn Heart
Drops Blood while I propoſe it, yet we muſt,
We muſt for ever part.———Forbear, *Creuſa*,
That killing Look ſtrikes thro' me.—Think, O think,
What in this Age of Abſence I have borne,
How combated each tender Thought, and liv'd
For thy dear Sake a Victim to Deſpair.
But now if thou conſent'ſt, all, all is mine,
And I forgive my Fate.—The dear, dear Boy,
I have a Means to place him on the Throne
Secure as we could wiſh.

CREUSA.

Secure he ſhall be,
I will proclaim him to the World as mine,
And *Athens* ſhall with Joy receive its Sov'reign;
The Tyrant *Xuthus* ſhall be taught to fear
A Maſter's Frown.

NICANDER.

Thy Raſhneſs, my *Creuſa*,
May ruin all.

CREUSA.

I will be raſh, if this

Be Raſhneſs, to declare to Earth, to Heav'n,
A Mother's Heart-felt Joy, whoſe only Child
Snatch'd from the Grave unhop'd for comes to claim,
With every Grace and every Virtue crown'd,
Th' Imperial Seat of his great Anceſtors.
And ſhall we wait a Means?

NICANDER.

We need not wait;
For by my Care th' important Means is found
Already, and no human Power but thine
Can hinder our Succeſs. I would have hid
The Secret from thee till thy wiſh'd Conſent
Had giv'n my Purpoſe Strength, but thou defeat'ſt
My utmoſt Caution, and wilt force me tell thee,
Ilyſſus is young *Ion!*——Ha! *Creuſa!*
Thou art not mad! Good Heaven! how her Eye fixes!
What have I done? what ſaid, which could attack
The Seats of Senſe with this amazing Force?
My Wife, my Queen, O ſpeak?——

CREUSA.

Off, touch me not,
Thou can'ſt not bring Relief.——O I am curs'd
Beyond all Power of Aid. Thou too art curs'd
And know'ſt it not.——He dies, he dies, *Nicander!*

NICANDER.

Amazement! who?

CREUSA.

O had he not been mine,
His Youth, his Softneſs, each attracting Grace—
I ſhould have ſtaid whole Ages ere in Thought
I had conſented to ſo damn'd a Deed.
Tears, Tears, why burſt ye not?—But what have I
To do with Tears? thoſe are for tender Mothers.

The

The Tigreſs weeps not o'er her mangled Prey.—
He dies, he dies, *Nicander*.

NICANDER.

Who? *Ilyſſus?*
Speak, ſpeak, *Creuſa*.

CREUSA.

Phorbas urg'd the Deed,
And I conſented; at the Feaſt he dies
By Poiſon.—O my Soul!

NICANDER.

Fly then, this Inſtant
Perhaps thou may'ſt prevent it, as thou cam'ſt
He parted hence.—I knew not to his Death!

CREUSA.

I go, I fly.

NICANDER.

Yet ſtay, thy Raſhneſs there,
If Fate has ſav'd him, may undo us yet.
—The *Pythia!* true, the *Pythia* ſhall ruſh in
To ſtop the fatal Banquet, and declare
The Feaſt unhallow'd; at this lucky Moment
She waits me in the Temple.—Stay, *Creuſa*.

[*Exit* Nicander.

CREUSA.

The *Pythia*, no; I will myſelf outſtrip
The Lightning's Speed. Whatever be th' Event,
'Tis not too late to die. [*Exit.*

The End of the Fourth ACT.

ACT

ACT V.

The Laurel Grove.

PHORBAS and LYCEA.

LYCEA.

O Earth! O Heaven! O wretched, wretched *Athens!*

PHORBAS.

Speak on, *Lycea*; wherefore art thou ſilent?
Why do'ſt thou lead me to this ſecret Shade?
What mean thy flowing Tears?

LYCEA.

The Queen, the Queen!

PHORBAS.

Say, what of her?

LYCEA.

I know not, all to me
Is Terror and Confuſion.

PHORBAS.

What thou know'ſt
Relate.

LYCEA.

She ſent me forth to ſeek thee, *Phorbas*;
I found thee not, but met at my Return
Creuſa's ſelf. Deſpair was in her Eyes,
With haſty Steps ſhe ſhot impatient by me,
Nor liſten'd when I ſpake. I follow'd wond'ring,
And enter'd the Pavilion.

PHORBAS.

The Pavilion?
Why, went ſhe to the Banquet?

LYCEA.

Eager went,
Deſpair and Anguiſh mixing on her Look.
But, O good Heaven, how chang'd was that Deſpair
To inexpreſſive Joy, when from the Croud
She learnt *Ilyſſus* had delay'd the Feaſt,
And won the King once more to aſk her Preſence,
" Where is he? let me claſp him to my Breaſt, "
She cried; " I now no longer will reſiſt
" Heaven's high command." Imperial *Xuthus* roſe
With Tranſport to receive her, and loud Shouts
Proclaim'd the People's Joy. When, Death to Sight!
Eternal Pain to Memory! the Slave
Preſents the Goblets; Fill, ſhe cried, a third,
I too will hail *Ilyſſus* King of *Athens*.
But firſt all ſwear, ſwear by immortal *Jove*,
By the far-darting God who here preſides,
And the chaſte Guardian of our native Fanes,
Swear here, ſwear all, and binding be the Oath,
Ilyſſus only ſhall be *Athens'* King.

PHORBAS.

What could ſhe mean?

LYCEA.

Attentive *Xuthus* caught
With Joy the happy Omen, and all ſwore
Ilyſſus only ſhould be *Athens'* King.
This done, I ſaw her from *Ilyſſus'* Hand
Snatch the dire Goblet, and to him reſign
Her own untouch'd. The Slave who mix'd the Draught
Turn'd pale and trembled, I with eager Zeal

Preſs'd

Preſs'd forward, but in vain; ſhe firmly graſp'd
The Bowl, and ſmiling drank it to the Dregs.

PHORBAS.

The Poiſon, ha?—I knew her fooliſh Fondneſs
Would ſtart at Murder's Name. But wherefore die?
Why turn upon herſelf her impious Rage?
'Twas Madneſs all; or elſe ſome new Contrivance,
Some freſh *Æolian* Fraud.——I care not what.
I yet will blaſt their Schemes.—Yes, let her die,
By her own Folly periſh. *Athens* ſtill
Survives, and ſhall ſurvive.—I muſt be ſudden.
She doubtleſs will betray me to the King,
And cut off ev'n this laſt Reſource. *Lycea*,
Be ſecret, and thy Country ſhall be free.

LYCEA.

Were it not better, *Phorbas*, firſt to ſee her,
Perhaps ſome Secret unreveal'd may lurk
Beneath this Show of unexampled Raſhneſs.
She left the Banquet ſoon, and with the *Pythia*
Enter'd the Temple.

PHORBAS.

With the *Pythia*, ſay'ſt thou?
Then there is Miſchief toward.

LYCEA.

Yet now alone
We may ſurprize her, for I ſaw the Maid
Quick from the Fane return with haſty Steps
As if diſpatch'd on ſome important Meſſage,
Perhaps to find thee out. Sure thou ſhould'ſt ſee her.

PHORBAS.

And periſh, ha?—No, no, my ſacred Country,
Too much already have I been deceiv'd;
I will not leave thee in a Woman's Power.

—Yet hold, *Lycea* may inform her of them
And my Deſigns prove yet abortive. Maid,
Thy Preſence may be needful.

LYCEA.

Mine? Good Heaven,
In what? *Creuſa* will require my Aid;
At leaſt my Tears are due to my poor Queen
In her laſt Moments.

PHORBAS.

Stay, ſhe wants them not;
I know the Poiſon's Force too well, *Lycea*,
To fear a Death ſo ſudden. This Way, Maid;
Nay, thou muſt go; I ſhall have Buſineſs for thee,
Some ſecret Meſſage to the Queen, *Lycea*,
Which thou alone can'ſt bear. [*Exeunt.*

Enter PYTHIA *and* NICANDER.

PYTHIA.

'Twas he, I ſaw him and *Lycea* with him.
Sure he ſhould be inform'd?—Thou hear'ſt me not.

NICANDER.

This Action of the Queen ſits near my Heart.

PYTHIA.

She bade me tell thee.—But why waſte we Time,
Thou now may'ſt enter at the Poſtern Gate
Unſeen by all.

NICANDER.

Why did'ſt thou not ruſh in, and ſtop the Feaſt?
Thy ſpeedy Preſence there had ſav'd us all.

PYTHIA.

What could I do? The Queen was there already
And all ſeem'd Peace and Joy; could I ſuſpect
That Poiſon lurk'd beneath ſo fair a ſeeming?

NICANDER.

NICANDER.

She breaks thro' my Deſigns.—Unhappy Woman!
My Soul bleeds for her, and Confuſion hangs
On every riſing Thought.—The dear, dear Boy!—
Where is he, at the Banquet ſtill?

PYTHIA.

He is.

NICANDER.

And where *Creuſa*?

PYTHIA.

I already told thee,
But thou regard'ſt not, in the Temple's Gloom
Retir'd ſhe ſits, expecting thy Approach.
We there may ſettle all.

NICANDER.

I fear her much.
Thou ſeeſt her Paſſions are too near concern'd
To be of uſe to us; thy cooler Senſe
Muſt here direct us. Does the Poiſon's Power
Affect her yet?

PYTHIA.

Not yet; I would have tried
Some powerful Antidote to quell its Force;
But ſhe refuſes Life, and only begs
To ſee her Son and thee.

NICANDER.

I will attend
Upon the Inſtant. But firſt hear me, *Pythia*;
Thou ſeeſt on what a Precipice we ſtand,
It were in vain to hope we could conceal
The Truth from *Xuthus*, from the reſt we may;
'Tis thy taſk therefore—

PYTHIA.

PYTHIAS.

What? to own the Fraud,
And publiſh to the King that *Delphi*'s Shrine
Is not oracular. Ha!

NICANDER.

To the King
'Twere better ſure to publiſh the Deceit
Than to the World; and where's the Means but this
To hide it? By *Creuſa*'s Art thou ſay'ſt
He is already bound in ſolemn Oaths
To leave *Ilyſſus* Heir to *Athens*' Throne.
Can'ſt thou not add ſtill ſtronger Oaths, or ere
Thou do'ſt reveal the Secret of our Fate?
Then who ſhall dare to break them? ſhall the King?
Thou know'ſt his ſcrup'lous Piety extends
Almoſt to Weakneſs. What ſhould tempt him to it?
Creuſa dead can frame no Schemes againſt him;
The Boy to him alone muſt owe his Greatneſs;
And for *Nicander*, never more ſhall *Greece*
Hear his forgotten Name.

PYTHIA.

It muſt be ſo;
And yet——

NICANDER.

What yet? to *Phorbas* thou with eaſe
May'ſt own the Truth; he will not ſtart at Fraud
In ſacred things.—But ſee, the Queen approaches
Impatient of our Stay. She changes not!
The Bloom of Health is ſtill upon her Cheek!
Fain would *I* hope—But Hopes, alas, are vain.——
What haſt thou done, *Creuſa*?

CREUSA *entering*.

Sav'd *Ilyſſus*!

NICANDER.

NICANDER.

Thou might'ſt have liv'd with Honor.

CREUSA.

Liv'd! good Heaven!
I ſtart, I tremble at the Thoughts of Life.
Can'ſt thou reflect on what I had deſign'd,
On what I am, on what, alas, I have been,
And not perceive Death was my only Refuge?
—Am I not *Xuthus'* Wife, and what art thou?
O had'ſt thou ſeen the Torments of my Soul,
When in one haſty Moment it ran o'er
The Buſineſs of an Age, weigh'd all Events,
Saw *Xuthus*, Thee, *Ilyſſus*, *Athens* bleed
In one promiſcuous Carnage!—Light at length
Burſt thro' the Gloom, and Heaven's own Voice proclaim'd
One Victim might ſuffice.———
For *Xuthus* Honor ſtrove, and mightier Love
Aſſum'd *Nicander*'s Cauſe. Who then could fall?
Could *Xuthus?* could *Nicander?*——no; *Creuſa.*

NICANDER.

Would thou had'ſt been leſs kind!—But, O my Queen,
To blame thee now were vain.———

CREUSA.

To blame? 'tis Praiſe,
'Tis Triumph I demand. He lives! he reigns!
Young *Ion* lives! young *Ion* reigns in *Athens!*
O bring him, *Pythia*, bring him to my Arms;
Let me but pour a laſt ſad Bleſſing o'er him,
And Death has loſt its Terrors.
How now, *Lycea?*

Enter LYCEA *haſtily.*

LYCEA.

Mighty Queen, I know not

If

If thy Command would authorize th' Attempt,
But *Phorbas* with an arm'd *Athenian* Band
Now enters the Pavilion to deſtroy
The King and young *Ilyſſus*.

NICANDER.

Earth and Heaven!
What ſay'ſt thou, Maid?

CREUSA.

O let me fly to ſave him,
Here ſhall their Poinards———

NICANDER.

Reſt thou there, *Creuſa*,
Thy Embaſſies to-day have prov'd too fatal.
My Life for his I ſave him from the Stroke,
And on the Inſtant ſend him to thy Arms.
Now, Fate, be doubly mine! [*Exit.*

CREUSA.

Off, let me go, I will not be reſtrain'd.
They tear him piecemeal!

PYTHIA.

Patience, mighty Queen!
What Man can do *Nicander* will perform.

CREUSA.

He is a Father only to my Child,
He cannot tell them what a Mother feels.
—*Phorbas* was born the Curſe of me and mine.
I might have known to what his impious Rage
Would urge him on, and ſhould have firſt inform'd him.
—Gods! muſt I never know ſweet Peace again,
Not even in Death have Reſt!

PYTHIA.

Behold who comes
To bleſs thee ere thou dieſt, and ceaſe to murmur
At Heaven's high Will.

Enter

Enter ILYSSUS.

CREUSA.

It is, it is *Ilyſſus*—
My Son, my Son!

ILYSSUS.

Good Heavens! and do I live
To ſee a Parent melt in Fondneſs o'er me!
—*Aletes* ſaved me from the Soldiers' Arms,
And bade me fly to find a Mother here.
Art thou indeed that Mother, mighty Queen!
And may I call thee ſo? Thou art, thy Looks
Thy Tears, thy kind Embrace, all, all proclaim
The Truth—O let me thus, thus on my Knees—

CREUSA.

Riſe, riſe, my Child; I am, I am thy Mother.

ILYSSUS.

O ſacred Sound, *Ilyſſus* is no more
That outcaſt Youth. A Mother, and a Queen
He finds at once.

CREUSA.

But art thou ſafe, my Child?
Haſt thou no Wound?

ILYSSUS.

The old grey-headed Man,
Who brought this Morn the News of thy Arrival,
Had rais'd againſt my Breaſt his eager Sword,
Defenceleſs I; when good *Aletes* came
And ſnatch'd me from the Stroke. I would have ſtaid,
Unarm'd with him have ſtaid, but his Command
Was abſolute, that I ſhould fly to find,
What I have found, a Mother! [*Embracing her.*
Yet, O Queen,
Why am I thus encompaſs'd round with Wonder?

May I not know this Riddle of my Fate?
Why firſt condemn'd to paſs my Infant Days
In this obſcure Retreat? If I am thine,
Thy Son, illuſtrious Queen, ſure I was born
To Thrones, and Empires?

CREUSA.

Thou art born to Thrones,
And ſhalt in *Athens* reign.

ILYSSUS.

As *Xuthus'* Heir.
Is *Xuthus* then my Sire? Forgive me, Queen,
I have a thouſand, and a thouſand Doubts.
Can *Xuthus* be my Sire?

PYTHIA.

Forbear, *Ilyſſus*,
Nor preſs thy Fate too far. When Time permits
Thou ſhalt know all.

CREUSA.

Shalt know it now, *Ilyſſus*.
Not *Xuthus* is thy Sire, but that brave Man
Who but this Inſtant ſnatch'd thee from thy Fate,
And by that Act proclaim'd himſelf a Father.

ILYSSUS.

Aletes?

CREUSA.

Not *Aletes*, but *Nicander*,
My wedded Lord, thy Sire!—And ſee, he comes
To bleſs thee, and confirm the ſacred Truth.
—Good Heaven, he bleeds!

Enter NICANDER.

NICANDER.

To Death, to Death, *Creuſa*.
Amid the Fray I met the Fate I ſought for.

All elſe is ſafe, and *Xuthus* now purſues
A ſcatter'd Few, who fall beneath his Sword.
—Where is my Boy?——Ye Guards of Innocence!
How has he been beſet, and how eſcap'd!
—Where is my Boy, for I may own him now,
And claſp him to my Breaſt, no more *Aletes*,
The ſage Inſtructor of a Youth unknown,
But the dear Father weeping o'er his Child.

ILYSSUS.

O Sir, what Gratitude before inſpir'd
Let Duty pay.

NICANDER.

I have no Time to waſte
In Fondneſs now. Hear my laſt Words, *Ilyſſus*,
And bind them to thy heart. Thou ſtill muſt live
The Son of *Xuthus*. The good *Pythia* here
Will tell thee all the Story of thy Fate:
And may'ſt thou proſper as thou do'ſt obey
Her ſacred Counſel. *Xuthus* too muſt know
The fatal Tale; but to the World beſide
It muſt be hid in Darkneſs.

PYTHIA.

Phorbas ſure
Should be inform'd.

NICANDER.

Phorbas has breath'd his laſt;
And the brib'd Slave who mix'd the poiſonous Draught
Fell by this Hand.——*Ilyſſus*, O farewel.
I will not bid Adieu to thee, *Creuſa*,
Thy Colour changes, and the Lamp of Life
Fades in thy Eye; we ſoon ſhall meet again.——
Ilyſſus, Oh!——

ILYSSUS.

How hard he graſps my Hand!
My Lord, my Father! Have I learn'd ſo late,
To call thee by that Name, and muſt I loſe,
For ever loſe?——Good Heaven, ſhe graſps me too!
What means it, *Pythia?* the cold Damps of Death
Are on her.

CREUSA.

O my Child, enquire no farther;
'Tis fitting we ſhould part. *Lycea*, *Pythia*,
Intreat of *Xuthus*——yet I need not fear
His Goodneſs, tho' I wrong'd him, foully wrong'd him,
He yet will prove a Father to my Child,
And from the World conceal the fatal Truth.
O I am cold——what Bolts of Ice ſhoot thro' me!
How my Limbs ſhiver!—Nearer yet, my Child,
My Sight grows dim, and I could wiſh to gaze
For ever on thee.——Oh, it will not be——
Ev'n thou art loſt, *Ilyſſus*.—Oh—Farewel. [*Dies.*

ILYSSUS.

She dies, ſhe dies. Was I then only mock'd
With a vain Dream of Bliſs to be plung'd back
In deeper Miſery? Did I but hear
The tender Name of Child breath'd fondly o'er me
To make me feel what 'tis to loſe that Name?
O I am ten times more an Orphan now,
Than when I knew no Parents.

Enter XUTHUS, *&c.*

XUTHUS.

Where is this Murd'reſs, who with vile Deceit
Seem'd to conſent to ours, and Heaven's Deſigns,
Only to make us a more eaſy Prey
To her Aſſaſſins?—Ha, *Creuſa* dead?

And

And the brave Stranger who preſerv'd us all?
Is he too dead?—The Boy—

PYTHIA.

Ilyſſus lives.

And thou haſt ſworn, great King, that he ſhall reign
Supreme in *Athens*. Say, do'ſt thou confirm
That Oath?

XUTHUS.

I do, by Heaven!

PYTHIA.

Aſk here no more.
The fatal Tale is for thy private Ear.
Retire, and learn it all. For poor *Creuſa*,
She wrong'd not thee, upon herſelf alone
She drew Heaven's Vengeance. And too ſurely proves
That Murder but intentional, not wrought
To horrid Act, before th' eternal Throne
Stands forth the firſt of Crimes. Who dare aſſume,
Unwarranted, Heaven's high Prerogative
Oe'r Life and Death, with double Force ſhall find
Turn'd on themſelves the Miſchiefs they deſign'd.

The End of the Fifth ACT.

EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Miſs HAUGHTON, who acted the PYTHIA.

AT length I'm freed from Tragical Parade,
No more a Pythian Prieſteſs,—tho' a Maid;
At once reſigning, with my ſacred Dwelling,
My Wreaths, my Wand, my Arts of Fortune-telling.

Yet ſuperſtitious Folks, no doubt, are here,
Who ſtill regard me with a kind of Fear,
Leſt to their ſecret Thoughts theſe prying Eyes
Should boldly paſs, and take them by Surprize.
Nay, tho' I diſavow the whole Deceit,
And fairly own my Science all a Cheat,
Should I declare, in ſpite of Ears and Eyes,
The Beaus were handſome, or the Critics wiſe,
They'd all believe it, and with dear Delight
Say to themſelves at leaſt,
"The Girl has Taſte;" "the Woman's in the right."

Or, ſhould I tell the Ladies, ſo diſpos'd,
They'd get good Matches, ere the Seaſon cloſ'd,
They'd ſmile, perhaps, with ſeeming Diſcontent,
And, ſneering, wonder what the Creature meant;
But whiſper to their Friends, with beating Heart.
"Suppoſe there ſhould be ſomething in her Art"
Grave Stateſmen too would chuckle, ſhould I ſay,
On ſuch a Motion, and by ſuch a Day,
They would be ſummon'd from their own Affairs
To 'tend the Nation's more important Cares;
"Well, if I muſt——howe'er I dread the Load,
"I'll undergo it——for my Country's Good.

All Men are Bubbles, in a ſkilful Hand,
The ruling Paſſion is the Conjurer's Wand.
Whether we praiſe, foretell, perſuade, adviſe,
'Tis that alone confirms us Fools or Wiſe.
The Devil without may ſpread the tempting Sin,
But the ſure Conqueror is——the Devil within.

A SECOND EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs. PRITCHARD.

STAY, Ladies—Tho' I am almoſt tir'd to Death
With this long Part—and am ſo out of Breath—
Yet ſuch a lucky Thought kind Heaven has ſent,
That if I die for't, I muſt give it Vent.
The Men you know are gone. And now, ſuppoſe,
Before our Lords and Maſters are rechoſe,
We take th' Advantage of an empty Town,
And chuſe a Houſe of Commons of our own.
What think ye, cannot we make Laws?—and then
Cannot we too unmake them, like the Men?
O place us once in good St. Stephen's *Pews,*
We'll ſhew them Women have their public Uſe.
Imprimis they ſhall marry; not a Man
Paſt twenty-five, but what ſhall wear the Chain.
Next, we'll in earneſt ſet about Reclaming,
For, by my Life and Soul, we'll put down Gaming.
We'll ſpoil their deep deſtructive Midnight Play;
The Laws we make, we'll force them to obey;
Unleſs we let them, when their Spirits flag,
Piddle with us, ye know, at Quinze and Brag.
"I hope, my Deareſt," ſays ſome well-bred Spouſe,
"When ſuch a Bill ſhall come before your Houſe,
"That you'll conſider Men are Men—at leaſt
"That you'll not Speak, my Dear."—Not ſpeak?—The Beaſt!
What, would you wound my Honour?—Wrongs like theſe—
For this, Sir, I ſhall bring you on your Knees.
—Or, if we're quite good-natur'd, tell the Man
We'll do him all the Service that we can.
Then for ourſelves, what Projects, what Deſigns?
We'll tax, and double tax their naſty Wines;
But Duty-free import our Blonds and Laces, [*Faces.*
French *Hoops*, French *Silks*, French *Cambricks*, *and*—French
In ſhort, my Scheme is not compleated quite,
But I may tell ye more another Night.
So come again, come all, and let us raiſe
Such glorious Trophies to our Country's Praiſe,
That all true Britons *ſhall with one Conſent*
Cry out, "Long live the Female Parliament!

THE END.

A SECOND
EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs. PRITCHARD.

THE END.